# TELOS

Number 66 Winter 1985-86

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# TELOS

## A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Foreign subscribers, including those in Canada, must pay an additional 10 percent to cover handling and postage charges.

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Available back issues: Nos. 13, 17-65. Cost to individuals is $5.50 per copy for each issue prior to No. 50; $6.00 each for No. 50 onward. Institutions pay $15.00 each for all back issues. Foreign orders add 10 percent. Payment must be in U.S. funds (no checks drawn on Canadian banks can be accepted). Out-of-print issues may be obtained in microform or facsimile editions through University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA.

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*Telos* No. 66 corresponds to Vol. 19, No. 1. *Telos* is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter for $22.00 per year by Telos Press, 431 East 12th Street, New York, NY 10009. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

TELOS
431 East 12th Street
New York, NY 10009



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ISSN 0090-6514


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# INTRODUCTION

*During the past decade it has become increasingly evident that the reception of European social theory within the remnants of the American New Left, by now installed in placid academic positions and out of the mainstream of any relevant political discourse, has not been a particularly fruitful experience. First, the rediscovery of Marxism-Leninism led to the internal disintegration of whatever was radical and original within the movement. Later, after this shock had been finally absorbed, and largely as a result of it, the wholesale return to the previously despised liberalism has rendered the aging New Left a political sad-sack either begging at the door of the Democratic Party or desperately apologizing for new, but not improved, editions of Marxist-Leninist regimes. In the face of this, all critical theory could do was either retreat to an Adornoesque intellectual hibernation which condemns all but at the same time ends up equally accepting all, or mystify political thought through a re-Kantianization of reality checkmating intellectuals into an undistorted but drab communication occasionally punctured with self-congratulatory calls for democracy, autonomy, civil society, and human rights. Clearly, whatever Left is left, it is now to be found in the infamous dustbin of history where for decades it routinely banned its ridiculed adversaries.*

*Both in its old sullen and Delphic Adornoesque version and in its new eclectic Habermasian brand, critical theory is by now, at best, an academic curiosity. And French social thought does not seem to fare much better. After all the semiotic pyrotechnics of the 1970s and the post-modern fads of the early 1980s it is ironic that French intellectuals are increasingly lured back into theoretical sanity by nothing other than German Critical Theory or a* bricolage *of American ideas. The crossing of French and German wires is remarkable. As Bowie points out in his review of Negt and Kluge, the German heirs of critical theory have left aside Adorno's emphatic questioning of reason in favor of a conservationist attitude towards modernity, while negative dialectics and aesthetic "subversion" are alive and well in Paris. There are French Heideggerians on one side, and German Cartesians, on the other. Some, like Negt and Kluge, seem to mix everything together again: Marx, Foucault, and Derrida, in order to get close to the "stubbornness" of life and subjectivity in an administered and commodified society. The result, however, is a noble hodge-podge. Rochlitz's report on a recent meeting of French and German intellectuals in Paris shows two things: that the major figures in each camp cannot talk to each other, and that, on the sides, there is a new trading of places. Because the older Germans are afraid of a relapse into irrationalism, they are unprepared to accept the Nietzschian and Heideggerian tones of Derridian deconstruction. The French post-structuralists, for their part, find German lectures on ethical discourse, communicative rationality, and the "achievements of modernity" both arrogant and flat. While this mismatch is played out on center stage, other things are happening as well. A younger group of French philosophers are ready to appropriate Habermas, and be guided by Kant and Fichte. And younger Germans begin to toy with French aesthetic theory. While these two European traditions cross-sterilize each other, it makes sense to simultaneously turn to American society to begin to understand the dynamics of new political realities and to confront American thought at its best. When all is said and done, if recent chatter about civil society, liberalism, democracy and autonomy is stripped of its mystifying jargon and foreign accents, one is left with a warmed-over version of that pragmatist discourse that engaged Left American intellectuals in the 1930s. It took communicative action and universal pragmatics to make us appreciate Dewey's pragmatism, Mead's symbolic interactionism, or James' psychology. Thus, the intellectual task is clear. Radical thought in the U.S. has to rediscover its American roots and take it from there.*

*In beginning to undertake this task, Alt opens this issue with a re-evaluation of C.W. Mills in the face of either outrightly dishonest distortions or weak interpretations by official re-legitimated social science. Almost a quarter of a century after his death, C. Wright Mills stands head and shoulders above a whole generation of largely mediocre cold war social scientists whose dubious contribution to society has been the likes of busing, the welfare system, disintegrated mass education, bankrupt cities*



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*and cretinized culture. Similarly, in reviewing a recent work on G.H. Mead, Sica also points out how rich was the epistemological and philosophical coffer in the pre-WWII period when compared with recent formal retreats. Although Joas' Teutonization of Mead, which Sica both accepts and endorses, is not altogether convincing, it is fairly clear that the German theoretical mines had already been depleted as early as the turn of this century by American pragmatists. This is further corroborated by Schnädelbach who, although dissatisfied with the formal and empty character of reconsiderations of ethics within critical theory, cannot but endorse the shift away from the outlook of founding fathers such as Horkheimer who had no satisfactory philosophical foundations for their socio-political superstructures.*

*If the thrust of this criticism is vaguely reminiscent of recent neo-conservative attacks it is not accidental. To a great extent, much of neo-conservative thought has thrived by either appropriating a kind of Adornian critique of popular culture or vindicating that dimension of personal freedom and autonomy long defended by that sector of the Left that was defeated by the totalitarian wing. Thus, it is imperative to clarify what relation there is between a neo-conservative and a non-cretinized Left critique. Wolin's analysis of* The New Criterion *— a leading new-conservative organ — begins precisely such an analysis so as to prevent further unfounded charges of neo-conservatism.*

*Yet, notwithstanding the shift of focus towards the U.S., the riddle of Soviet-type societies remains a central concern. For this reason, in this issue Zaslavsky, Sampson, Staniszkis and Bloch provide glimpses of crucial features of these societies. Thus, as Zaslavsky points out, the life and the novels of Grossman tell us an enormous amount about three important things: the nature and dynamics of Soviet society, of the political terror, which decisively shaped that society as no other, and of literature which, when it rises to the occasion against incredible odds, manages to bear witness to the dreadful (and otherwise silent and lost forever) experience of millions, to show the concrete what, but also the how and the why, of mass and total terror, and to exemplify in its own fate, its message: terror and unfreedom can be transcended. The USSR under terror was a planet of horrors covered by thick clouds. The state managed to control and penetrate every aspect of life; it used extreme forms of punishment and in such ways that everyone became a potential victim — including those that for a while played the executioner's role. Almost nobody survived the grinder except the state. Compliance with the often delirious commands of the state never offered a guarantee of safety. Worse, most of the victims were enthusiasts of victimization. Grossman's novel points to a nefarious consequence of holding revolutionary illusions: the perfection of voluntary servitude; the monumental depletion of moral reserves. The state, the ideology, and the myriad forms of policing and self-policing become the sole context of life. And yet life is not successfully choked. It suffices one great writer drawing on the tradition of the great historical novel, one cranny through which his book slips, and the world knows, and the system ceases to be the ultimate context of everything, to be contextualized in turn.*

*Three books on Cambodia — reviewed by Good — also tell us that the great social horrors of this century cannot be encapsuled in simple accounts — not even in black fairy tales. The web of causes and complicities is much thicker than we think. A careful study of the Khmer Rouge shatters both pro-communist and anti-communist shibboleths. It shows how behind modern ideology hides barbaric atavism; behind internationalism, nationalism and ethnic strife, behind opposing principles, marriages of convenience, and last but not least, it shows the role of intellectuals in staging or abetting contemporary holocausts. The message is sobering: the Khmer Rouge — trained in the left intellectual mileux of Paris — are a distant mirror in which the progressive Western intelligentsia should look at itself. And, for the simplistic reactionaries in the West, the story is also unkind. It shows that the great American Southeast Asian anti-communist crusade actually contribued to a particular revolutionary genocide, and in the end made a deal with its perpetrators. In short, history is more cruel and complex than any official story. Armed with the most nonsensical ideas about progress, revolution, and freedom, we dance like fools, on the rim of a volcano — or a giant toilet bowl.*

*But even under the most extreme forms of oppression, at least some life must go on. Thus, Sampson*



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*describes how a thriving informal sector in Eastern Europe has developed under the asphyxiating bureaucratic apparatus to allow things to get done. This state of affairs, however, is clearly pathological and results in new types of social interaction where terror, irrationality and oppression become practically internalized. This internalization is so profound that it affects even opposition intellectuals. As Staniszkis points out, a close analysis of the unfolding of* Solidarity*'s outlook in Poland reveals to what a great extent* Solidarity *itself tended to duplicate the predominant features of Marxism-Leninism and how this led to considerable political mistakes.*

*In the same vein, but from an economist's viewpoint, Bloch indicates how a discredited and paralyzed Polish regime copes with its predicament by instrumentalizing what Sampson describes as the informal sector as a* private *economic sector able to provide goods and services the State is no longer able to handle. So, while State power is unambiguously reasserted, two other phenomena unfold within society: intellectuals internalize predominant ideogical forms, and civil society thrives — not as the Habermasians in the West will have it, i.e., an ideal public sphere characterized by undistorted communication, but as old fashioned capitalism whose rising economic power in the future is likely to threaten the State much more effectively than the intellectuals' discourse on freedom of speech, autonomy and human rights.*

*The cretinization of Left intellectuals, however, is not limited only to Eastern Europe. Thus, what Martin Jay narrates in his book on* Marxism and Totality *— even if, as Ulmen points out in his review, Jay uses the concept as a pressure cooker — is the story of Western intellectuals' grand self-delusion: the life and death of a pretension to grasp Society and History. Today, those failed gods and their altars belong in a museum of human follies. In this museum a central place must be reserved for Bruno Rizzi whose story Haberkern and Adler reconstruct — an embarrassment in which* Telos *also unwittingly participated. His reputation as a minor "underground" classic, the benevolence with which he has been hitherto treated, the willingness to treat seriously a single idea — as if the tip of an iceberg were just an ice cube — but forget, ignore, or delete the much larger rest, is more than a funny comedy of errors. How could the club of the left bestow honorary membership upon a crank, a pro-fascist, an anti-semite? To be sure, the full and wide exposure to the man and his ideas would have sufficed to do him in. But he was marginal to real movements; only the most quotable parts of his work had been read, and Trotsky lent his imprimatur by dragging him into a polemic. That was enough to make Rizzi lead a life of obscure respectability. Now we know the full story, and, once we swallow our embarrassment, we can even have a good and self-ironic laugh. But, above and beyond all this, we might also ask if some very mainstream left ideas — like the fascination with "superceding capitalism," and with the state — do not, quite naturally, and pushed to their logical rope-end, put us quite close — albeit in more discreet ways — to positions such as Rizzi's assessment of the great "anti-capitalist" powers of his day. At any rate, to document the extent of this intellectual fraud, this issue includes a chapter from Rizzi's recently partly-translated book,* The Bureaucratization of the World, *dealing with "The Jewish Question." This should end the story. May he rest in peace, with Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin whom he wanted to see supported by the labor movement against England and the Jews!*

*Finally, in our efforts to deal systematically with cultural issues, we publish here an interesting analysis by Agnes Heller of ex-T.V. hero Columbo as an expression of "the spirit of the times" with a reply indicating the extent to which intellectualistic bias prevents her from fully developing a radical interpretation of the American culture industry. Future issues will seek to further develop cultural themes of this type.*

Juan Corradi
Paul Piccone



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# RECLAIMING C. WRIGHT MILLS

## by John Alt

I

C. Wright Mills was that rarity among American thinkers — a political intellectual — who drew primarily on Western liberal traditions, American traditions of moral pragmatism and craftsmanship, the social classics and methods of sociology, to fashion a unique critical voice. Writing at the end of the liberal era, he brilliantly captured the outlines of a post-modern society he referred to as the "fourth epoch." In this work, he anticipated and helped shape much of what was good in the American new left, raising questions which remain largely unanswered twenty-four years after his untimely death at age forty-five.

Mills argued that the elaboration of reason and culture was necessary to oppose the new "behemoth" of social rationalization, as embodied in the new power of the corporate states and permanent war economy, the technical instrumentalization of knowledge in the cultural apparatus (mass media, universities), the default of intellectuals and the decline of independent publics, the ascendance of mass society and the atomized consumer, the decline of craftsmanship and the rise of status emulation, the overdevelopment of western society at the expense of underdeveloped portions, and not least the use of nuclear weapons to perpetuate the obsolete ideological battles of the superpowers. Mills was an isolated voice among his political generation to reject the old issues and politics of an earlier entrepreneurial capitalism and to shape those of a new epoch and generation. He demonstrated that beneath the veil of technical rationality and human despair were ideas, motives, ideologies — potential forces of reason, legitimating or not the centralization of power. Where most despaired about the necessity of historical fate, Mills always argued that reason coupled to will, ethics, and moral responsibility could make a difference in human affairs.

In fundamental ways, the culture and politics of the present resembles the fifties. It is not that America has regressed nostalgically, only that the country has not fundamentally changed. Mills' best work was written in the fifties and it is no surprise that *White Collar*, *The Power Elite*, *The Sociological Imagination*, and his collected essays *Power*, *Politics and People*, still have that character of being written only yesterday. This continuity between the fifties and eighties merits a continuing interest and critical reexamination of Mills. We should ask of him what he himself asked of other thinkers and theories: what is enduring and irrelevant in terms of ideals, theories, and ideologies? Glib and stereotypic categorizations should be avoided: he was neither a Wobbly-style or



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Marxian radical nor an existential pragmatist who became a pamphleteer and rhetorical pundit. In two recent biographies there is a tendency for the authors to fall into these traps: Rick Tilman creates a radical intellectual tradition in America and inserts Mills as its modern agent.[1] Irving Louis Horowitz denies such a tradition in favor of a professional conception of sociology to which Mills contributed but ultimately violated by his personal utopianism.[2] The two books tend to use Mills to legitimate radical and neo-conservative political conceptions of the appropriate role of knowledge in human affairs.

II

Rick Tilman's biography is a good yet ambiguous study in American intellectual history which locates Mills' radicalism in native American traditions (Puritan individualism) and philosophy (Veblen's institutionalism, Mead's symbolic interactionism, and Dewey's pragmatism).[3] How native American culture filtered through these key American thinkers and Mills to generate radical theories, as they reacted to an increasingly industrially-collective and bureaucratic capitalism, is the subject of the biography. Tilman's thesis, occasionally overstretched to remain internally consistent, is that the tension between American culture's ideals and its social structure of bureaucratic capitalism produced a "native radicalism." While Tilman does not necessarily formalize the liberal normative tradition in quite this way, the tradition as used by these American intellectuals is distinguishable by its core concepts of moral individualism (action grounded in ethicized knowledge), craftsmanship and work-as-a-calling, and participatory democracy and publics. The core ideals of individualism and democracy which American liberalism has never reconciled with its institutions is the normative basis of an enduring radicalism in the works of Veblen, Mead, Dewey, and Mills.

Tilman is partially correct in arguing that Mills' sociology was basically formed through native American ideas and ideals and that he drew eclectically upon European theory to complement and structure his theories of America. Neither a political radical in the conventional sense nor a European Marxist, Mills drew upon Veblen and Dewey to construct a radical, yet within the Americal grain, view of mid-twentieth century America. In his chapter on Mills' major work on power and stratification, Tilman shows how the main burden for Mills was demonstrating that the autonomous individual and the democratic public had been undermined in favor of functional conformism and the centralization of power. Mills identified the ascendance of individual

1. Rick Tilman, *C. Wright Mills: A Native Radical and His American Intellectual* (University Park, Pa., 1984).

2. Irving Louis Horowitz, *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian* (New York, 1983).

3. An important feature of Tilman's book is the rich use he made of a neglected storehouse of unpublished dissertations and other obscure published essays on Mills by young scholars writing after the sixties, including an unpublished manuscript by one of Mills' children, Pamela Mills, entitled "The Dialectic of C. Wright Mills," (Barnard college, 1965). Much of the breadth and originality of Tilman's study, as he freely acknowledges, comes from the use of more obscure writings, sort of an "underground" literature on Mills.

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and political alienation with institutional rationalization which reified the structure of business, classes, and power over the life of the individual. The eclipse of the morally autonomous individual revealed the crisis of reason and freedom and thus the ending of the liberal era. As Tilman writes, Mills lamented that "It is the 'morally free' in man that is obscured in American society, a society in which moral alienation is the condition of success" (199). In such a world the preservation of reason and freedom increasingly fell to the intellectual whose "special job was to be the caretaker of ultimate values, so that he could represent the cultural and political conscience of the larger society" (177). Despairing of any native radicalism from bureaucratized America, Mills, as Dewey had done before him, pinned his hopes on the actions of intellectuals and the intelligentsia.

In a related chapter Tilman discounts the political or normative influence of Marx, the Machiavellians, Weber, Freud, and Mannheim, suggesting that Mills simply drew eclectically from these European thinkers to fit his models already worked out from his engagement with American culture. While there is some truth to this, Tilman makes too rigid a distinction between American and European culture. Both cultures reflect a common moral core of Enlightenment or liberal values — individual reason and democratic freedom. What Mills took from the European thinkers was their theory that liberalism was being destroyed by functional rationality, a process which Mills observed in America with the rise of progressivism, the corporation, and the New Deal state. Overstating his case of "native radical" doctrines, Tilman fails to consider that both American and European social theory were shaped as a critical dialogue with the values of the Western Enlightenment.

Veblen's important influence on Mills (ignored by Horowitz) gave him a model of the properly developed or balanced industrial society which valued industry and technology as a means to pursue a craftsmanship work style which combined the planning and design of products with their execution. Here liberal reason and freedom are defined as the worker having control over the relation between the social uses and moral ends of work *and* its technical means. The human activity of craftsmanship, not business or technology as functional rationality, was an ethical imperative. Craftsmanship was not merely important as human control over process and product. It was also the basis for a style of life (work-as-a-calling) where the standards of craftsmanship and the ideal of human control shape the relationship between individual character and social involvement and responsibility. Questions regarding production, the appropriate standard of living, and consumption could be posed and constrained within a morally-grounded framework of craftsmanship rather than the other way around (as it came to be with the domination of business over industry).

Mills also incorporated Veblen's ideas on institutional economics which viewed capitalism as a system of power rather than markets, and the individual as ceremonial creature rather than a rational maximizer of interest, predatory interests and ruling elites, and status emulation. Mills modified Veblen's

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theory of capitalism and added his idea of status emulation and the human propensity for irrational ceremonialism. Both Veblen and Mills argued that the increased domination of business over industry, of ruling elites over masses, altered the struggle for existence in that work-as-craftsmanship and style of life (and the corresponding moral traits of Protestant sobriety and effort) were replaced with the struggle for ceremonial status revealed through the privilege of not-working and conspicuous consumption. With the alienation of work and the loss of Protestant virtues, life becomes split off from work and dominated by irrational instincts (ceremonialism, predatory instincts, competitiveness) and by a business system which combine in the new form of wasteful production and conspicuous consumption.

Mills consistently utilized these ideas in his critique of human alienation in the middle classes (*White Collar*), the intellectuals (*Sociological Imagination*), and the problems of the "overdeveloped" society. Mills detested wasteful production, status emulation in leisure, competitive personalities and manipulative control, and conspicuous consumption because they represented a formally rationalized yet substantively irrational alternative to productive usefulness and craftsmanship. As Tilman shows, Mills took up many of Veblen's analytic concepts and normative standards, adapting them to new topics and concerns. Mills, not only a proud intellectual craftsman, also designed his own clothes and maintained his own motorcycle, while criticizing cheerful robots, sociological hacks, the permanent war economy, and the nuclearized cold war, which had abrogated the ideal relationship between work, technology, and freedom.

Dewey's pragmatism provided Mills with a liberal model of the relationship of thought and action. As in the model of craftsmanship, pragmatism is a statement as to the value of substantive reason, where the technique and practicality of actions are consequential in realizing human intention. The criterion of truth is that "one argues from the value of the consequences to the truth or falsity of the principles that precipitated the initial action that led to these consequences" (127). Intentional practicality emanates from a social consciousness informed by the moral viewpoints of particular and generalized others (Mead). In pragmatism the individual once again remains the seat of reason and reconciles the antinomies of is and ought, self and other. Pragmatist methodology always adapted its methods to the needs of particular problems as defined by some set of explicit normative standards. The particular nature of the relation between human values and problems should thus determine the selection of concepts and methods rather than the other way around. Ultimately, the pragmatic standard was that of the Enlightenment: the use of reason (Dewey's method of intelligence or Mills' sociological imagination) should yield increased freedom — the freedom of the *individual* to link intention with action and judge the moral adequacy of its consequences. As a model of moral individualism, pragmatism asserts that the individual is free to the extent that one is capable of making intelligent choices and assuming the responsibility for their consequences.

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The model of pragmatism was used by Dewey and Mills as a basis for a theory of publics and intellectuals, obviously drawing upon and revitalizing the Jeffersonian tradition of participatory democracy and the free formation of public opinion as the guiding basis of government and legitimate authority. In this tradition, knowledge should be socially-useful and inform action to bring about a desired future state of affairs. Knowledge, created and debated between and within intellectuals and active publics, would link the human concerns of ordinary individuals in families, workplaces, and neighborhoods to the policies of government as implemented by an independent civil service. Mills shared with Dewey a commitment to multiclass political coalitions; independent intellectuals; debating publics, parties, and associations, connecting the individual to power; and an enlightened civil service. Thus Mills' ideas for political reconstruction outlined in *The Power Elite* and *The Causes of World War Three* are similar to those in Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems.*

The key element in this model of publics, on which Dewey and Mills came to differ, was the role of intellectuals and formal knowledge: Dewey took a progressively-instrumental turn (formal education) while Mills remained committed to the idea of the politically-independent thinker and scholar, aloof from power but responsible to publics. For Mills the role of the "political writer" was a model of praxis which incorporated experience with craft, reality with ethics. Intellectual craftsmanship was itself a necessary form of political praxis in a democracy. In Mills' view, intellectuals should not join power or classes as organic intellectuals, but exist primarily as a counter force to centralized or ascendant power, informing and debating with multiclass coalitions, ad hoc publics, and political parties.

By the fifites, fully aware that bureaucratization and the mass society had largely eliminated the chances for the pragmatic conjunction of reason and freedom, Mills still continued to write and act as if the knowledge of the political writer could make a difference in human affairs. And ironically, for this pragmatic effort he was perjoratively labelled as "utopian" — the ultimate putdown for a pragmatic liberal.

In an otherwise good exposition of Dewey's relation to Mills, Tilman errs in a chapter where he tries to defend Dewey from Mills' criticism of his political uses of pragmatism and of the evolution of liberalism itself. Mills claimed that Dewey and liberalism in general had ceased to be either liberal or "radical," and Tilman, seemingly in order to uphold his thesis of a native radical doctrine, defends Dewey's ideas as radical against Mills' charges. Rather than blindly uphold either Dewey's or liberalism's native radicalism, Tilman should have followed the example of Mills himself: hold on to the enduring core of liberal values as an independent thinker, while analyzing how those same values can become formally rationalized. In other words, Mills retained the capacity to distinguish the is and the ought, while Dewey lost it. And the loss of the capacity to make this distinction, once the heart of pragmatism's promise, meant the loss of its radicalism.

At the heart of Mills' work is a constant, nagging, angry debate with liberal-

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ism and its public default, a theme launched in his dissertation on pragmatism and upheld to his last projects. What Tilman fails to understand is that as capitalism expanded through bureaucratic rationalization it created problems of inequality, alienation, and anomie. As the political expression of this process, the state took on the comparable corporate-style functions of national management as had the industrial corporations. One of the new functions of bureaucracy within corporations and the state was precisely the *management* of inequality, alienation, and anomie through various policies: creating effective consumer demand; welfare, education, and health programs to stabilize problems of surplus people and maintain quasi-conditions of equal opportunity; and provisioning of therapeutic, interpersonal solutions to resuscitate the collapsed individual. This concerted effort, which launched the totally-administered society by the fifties, was largely the result of Deweyian progressivism or the professionalization of knowledge as instrumental technique that Dewey himself had come to advocate. Mills' complaint, then, was that knowledge, education, and technology were translated into mere technical means by a new class of dependent professionals for the elites of formally-rationalized and over-developed institutions. In this process, the moral individual, craftsmanship, independent intellectuals, and autonomous publics and parties were relegated to the historical trash-heap by a totalitarian process disguised as "modernization," structural differentiation, and "progressive reform" by a new professional class.

It is not that Tilman is completely unaware of this process. The problem is that he fails to understand how Dewey's use of liberalism was done without sufficient appreciation of the doctrine's internal contradictions relative to rationalizing capitalism. Blind to the dangers posed by the centralization of capitalism and the state, liberals blithely assumed that the diffusion of professional knowledge through education and technology in an economic context of growth would reconcile the antinomies posed by capitalism. Liberals, in order to preserve a business system and defend the necessity of man's adversarial struggle with nature had to accommodate the rationalization of the system — professionalization, mass education, and technological growth. Instrumental rationality replaced practical reason. Mills argued against the political poverty of incremental reform as the preoccupation of those who were blind to power or ultimate values and were content with addressing problems within their spheres of influence as those solvable by "intelligence and discussion" (Dewey's program). And Mills noted the irony that in a bureaucratic society all problems came to be defined through a professional ideology of interpersonal solutions. Liberalism had become "illiberal practicality" as part of that process which had turned workers and citizens into "cheerful robots."

Tilman's theory of "indigenous insurgency" in the works of Veblen, Dewey, and Mills is the common reconciliation of the virtues of individualism and community which placed them in tension or conflict with the institutional structures of American society. They rejected that version of individualism which equated it to narrow self-interest, avarice and profits, value relativism,

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and the reduction of value to market price. The result of unbounded individualism was not only human irrationalism and social anomie, but the continuing social problems of class inequality and conflict, and the collapse of community into struggles for survival. Never romantically nostalgic, native radicalism envisioned a new social individuality: Veblen and Mills' "craftsmanship" where planning-design and execution are incorporated within the individual who is morally socialized through the pragmatic application of skill and the viewpoints of the significant and generalized others; and Dewey and Mills' "volitional, pragmatic individual" who utilizes intelligence and knowledge — as citizen, activist, intellectual, educator — as intentional activity in a broader social context of symbolic communication with independent publics. While all three valued the personal traits of the classic individual — independence, self-reliance, personal uniqueness, and self-development — they appreciated that such virtues could only exist in socialized tension with the symbolic communities of work and political publics. It was the ascendance of business over craft, and of bureaucracy over public, that led to a native, insurgent doctrine built around an idealized reconciliation of the individual and the community.

Tilman concludes with an idealist interpretation that traces the origins of the American radical intellectual tradition to Puritanism which became secularized within pragmatism. In an abstract twist of argumentation, Tilman suggests that the Puritan doctrine of a "dualism that divides the world into the forces of good versus the forces of evil"(194-5) surfaced in Veblen, Dewey, and Mills as conflicts between industry and business, publics and bureaucracy, power elite and masses, rationality and reason. Religious dualism was secularized into various social antinomies, the contradictions of which were to be reconciled or transcended through the individual's commitment to productive effort (with a critique of waste and idleness), work as craftsmanship and calling (and the critique of profits, avarice, and mindless recreation), self-disciplined mastery of the environment through publics, and moral individualism whose ultimate loyalties were to universal ethics or conscience (with a critique of institutionalized behavioral codes). In short, the doctrinal core of the American radical intellectual tradition is secular Protestantism.

Tilman overstates the Puritan origins of American radicalism. It is of course true that the moral individualism of Puritanism, shed of its dogma, and incorporated within a tradition of self-reliant work, was adhered to as a philosophy and practice by Veblen, Dewey, and Mills, and was a normative foundation for their social and cultural criticism of America. Yet their models of moral individualism (in the secular, pragmatic sense), work, and publics cannot simply be distilled as secular Puritanism. While American Puritanism does influence their domain assumptions, models, and criticism, it is likely they were also and equally influenced by the Western and American doctrines of political liberalism and by the historically-unique role of intellectuals, knowledge and reason. Liberalism's concept of democracy, once central to its conception of freedom, and as reflected through the ideas of Jefferson and Tocqueville,

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stressed the moral significance of republican self-government as a necessary vehicle to reconcile freedom and equality, private rights and citizenship responsibilities. The liberal heritage, as reflected in the ideals of the republican town and participatory democracy, was a source of much that is valuable in the American radical intellectual tradition. Much of Mills' criticism was directed at the default of this *political* tradition. Further, Tilman underestimates the significance of the intellectual role shaped in common yet diverse ways by Veblen, Dewey, and Mills. This role was neither that of the traditional intellectual who idealistically represented the culture nor that of the organic intellectual who represented the interests of classes, but that of a "political writer" who distilled normative traditions through Dewey's "method of intelligence" or Mills' "reason" and "sociological imagination" as a critical discourse against organized power and irresponsibility and through the political agency of publics.

More importantly, after sorting through this intellectual history, what precisely is the American radical intellectual tradition, and how can it be distinguished from liberalism, progressivism, populism, or neoconservatism? That Veblen, Dewey, and Mills are important intellectual figures and critics is beyond doubt, but what is "radical" about their ideas? The first problem is that Puritanism, liberalism, and intellectualism are not inherently radical in a strict political sense, and in the context of specific historical conditions, can be altered, resymbolized, propagandized to fit immediate interests and politics. What Tilman has not answered is how it was possible for this native doctrine to be ultimately used by Dewey, for instance, in ways which strengthened and rationalized the very system his work was a progressive force against, or how Puritanism and/or liberalism was incorporated as "liberal rhetoric" (Mills) to justify the cold war, the bureaucratization of reason, and the expansions of corporations and the state.

Differently, the question of whether the moral doctrines of individualism and democracy become radical theories in opposition to the system is not simply a question of the normative power of the doctrine, but also a question of its private and public interpretation in terms of a pre-social human character of practical engagement and curiosity, if not rebelliousness, and as this human character interacts with the conduct of politics and power in specific circumstances. This is not to deny the cogency of Tilman's arguments or the ethical universalism at the heart of native radical doctrine. It is only to qualify the argument, underscore its limitations. For instance, Mills' concept of reason, which he linked to freedom, is grounded not only in the domain assumptions of Protestant individualism (which it was), but also in the ongoing struggle between a pre-social individual and the necessary constraints of civilization. If Mills criticized liberals for defaulting the normative basis of their traditions, he also did so because they were men who had given up on the struggle of the individual to challenge and change social environments as part of the condition of being human.

The second problem is that Tilman ambiguously shifts back and forth be-

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tween different meanings of radicalism, essentially that between the Marxian critique of capitalism and class inequality and that of the independent thinker and populist who critically engaged irresponsible power elites. Which is more native than the other? At the beginning of the book he defines radicalism as "transforming the political and economic structure of the society through changing the relations of property ownership and political power" (1). In order to be consistent with this old left, Marxist definition, Tilman stretches his interpretation of Veblen, Dewey, and Mills to indicate at points that their criticism was aimed at eliminating capitalism and class inequality. With Mills especially, Tilman associates radicalism with the critique of corporate capitalism and inequality. Unaware of the inconsistency, Tilman then turns around and chastises the American left for being too caught up in a foreign-based Marxian radicalism and ignoring the non-Marxian origins and character of the American intellectual radical tradition! To complicate matters, Tilman characterizes Mills as one who "chose to articulate ideals instead of hiding behind the subterfuge of methodological ritual or engaging in grantsmanship. He chose the path of social responsibility and moral freedom rather than the pursuit of power, economic self-interest, and professional respectability. In this sense his career and his ideas show what it means to be an authentic American radical" (202). In this sense, radicalism is moral individualism, a phenomenon which is neither organically American nor radical.

Finally, as if to settle the matter, Tilman concludes, alluding favorably to himself, that "As his more perceptive critics well understood, he was a radical liberal, not simply a radical or a liberal" (188). This means that the American radical intellectual tradition defines itself somewhere between liberalism and Marxism by loosely stressing the values of volitional individualism, egalitarianism, antiauthoritarianism, antistatism, participationism, communitarianism, technological optimism, and intellectual eclecticism (187). It was everything and thus nothing. Tilman seriously wishes to define the American radical intellectual tradition as a structured entity, and treats it so rhetorically throughout the text, and then he notes, in conclusion, that the tradition has always been pragmatic and ambiguous, and the difficulty of defining this legacy "is partly responsible for the unfinished ad hoc nature of much of Mills' work. Perhaps this is why characterizing the native radical heritage and chosing how Mills fits into it is a tentative, improvisatory enterprise at best" (187). Thus, as in a final, concluding mood of self-doubt so characteristic of American radicalism, Tilman commits intellectual suicide, suggesting that the native doctrines he so ambitiously strove to define are only as their more conservative critics had claimed long ago: ambiguous, ad hoc, tentative, and unfinished.

Yet to be fair, Tilman simply fails to pull out his own ideas in a consistent theory of theoretical radicalism relative to the relationship of native doctrine to indigenous insurgency in Veblen, Dewey, and Mills. The normative core of this native doctrine, as I have been suggesting, pivots on models of moral individualism, work as craftsmanship and calling, and knowledgeable publics

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as the base of power. In the variously-combined use of these models, Mills reconciled or transcended the dogmas and antinomies of both puritanism and liberalism as in the dualisms of reason and freedom, the individual and society, liberty and equality. Drawing from the heritage of both native and Western culture and politics, he fashioned distinctive political roles for the intellectual whose self-appointed responsibility was to ask society to live up to its ideals, but not necessarily as a conservative or traditional intellectual. The radical project was the use of normative theory to politicize issues of culture and politics, to criticize and function as an alternative to centralized power and "blind drift."

Mills always rejected the model of Marxian radicalism, clarifying the project of American radicalism as the confrontation and destructuring of bureaucratically-centralized power and irresponsibility and the resurrection of the moral individual. Mills consistently argued that the major problem of America was not capitalism and class, but institutional rationalization and the centralization of power which denied the capacity of the individual and the public to link means and ends, to work as craftsman with integrated work-leisure lives, to have control over those decisions that effected their lives, and to have access to reasoned opinion and communication. This was the essence of Mills' radical theory which, as Tilman has shown, can be traced back as a critical dialogue with the social thought of Dewey, Veblen, and Puritanism, but only in part. And as politics, the restoration of the individual and democracy and the transformation of technical rationality (and the ending of World War Three) was the practice that the theory sought to inform.

## III

Criticized by many of his own generation who had reduced politics to New Deal liberalism and anti-communism, Mills' work helped to inspire a new political generation in the sixties, contributing to a new left politics: anti-bureaucratic, politicizing issues of technical rationality; rehabilitation of the social individual, connecting emotion, ethics, knowledge and action; and politicizing ideas which flourished for a time in the social sciences and philosophy. However, Mills' death ('62), the subsequent fizzling out of the student and antiwar movements, and the incorporation of new left thinkers into university professionalism, contributed to the quick demise of an independent new left along the lines of Mills' model and ideals. Contrary to Tilman, America has had difficulty sustaining an indigenous radical intellectual tradition which, as Lasch has argued, has a lot to do with American exceptionalism, its myth of technological progress, its privileged removal from severe human suffering and conflict, its practical suspiciousness of ideas and an independent life of the mind, its belief that cultural reform could best be served through political action rather than through politicized intellectual work, and no less important than these, the discontinuities in mass political action and in a corresponding theory and practical vision of democratic

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government, industrial decentralization, and moral individualism.[4] And in the absence of sustained critical traditions of writing and criticism, there has been little continuity between intellectual generations. Thus, the new left was only a short-lived guerrilla raid on the conservative consensus (couched in liberal rhetoric) that has housed American culture and politics from the forties to the fifties.[5]

Most of those who entered the universities in pursuit of politically-intellectualized careers and public involvement did not continue the legacy of Mills' work: those influenced by Marcuse took up the expositional mastery of Critical Theory; others looked overseas for new models of radical theory and action, utilizing Third World interpretations of Marxism and the revolutionary models of Mao and Guevara; others took up French structuralism, reveling in the power of thingification in life and language; while others simply took refuge in academic disciplines, engaging in eclectic research, teaching, and social reform. Professionalism became the code word to legitimate the expansion of the interests and technical power of university-based, social science disciplines. The characteristics of social science criticized by Mills in the fifties reasserted themselves more strongly by the eighties: abstracted empiricism, neo-functionalist theory, pluralistic causation, practical research for the welfare state and corporations, the bureaucratic ethos and careerist gamesmanship, and the servicing of artificially-created social movements in the cities. The classic and Millsian issues of craftsmanship and capitalism, rationalization and the eclipse of reason and the individual, democracy and publics, became obscured in the new liberal rhetoric of post-industrialism, the equal exchange of abstract rights, modernism and modernization, and technological utopianism. The trend that Mills had observed as early as the thirties in his dissertation of pragmatism — the secular rationalization of knowledge within university institutions linked to the power of state and corporations — had come to full fruition by the eighties.[6] The new generation of university professors and their students became cut off from radical traditions *and* popular culture as their projects came to address technical issues of the discipline and the progressive properties of social modernity produced for the consumption of professional audiences.

One of those who was inspired by Mills and who helped to popularize his works in the sixties is Irving Louis Horowitz who had met Mills while a graduate student in philosophy at Columbia University in the early fifties. Initially stimulated by Millsian intellectual radicalism, Horowitz helped forge a movement for a "new sociology" in the universities by the early seventies, and ended up as an establishment professional by the eighties. Horowitz edited the excellent collection of Mills' essays, his dissertation on pragmatism, and a collection of essays in honor of Mills entitled *The New Sociology*.[7]

4. Christopher Lasch, *The Agony of the American Left* (New York, 1969), and *The New Radicalism in America* (New York, 1967).
5. Russell Jacoby, "Graying of the Intellectuals," *Dissent*, 30:2 (Spring, 1983), 234-237.
6. C. Wright Mills, *Sociology and Pragmatism* (New York, 1966).
7. C. Wright Mills, *Power, Politics and People* (New York, 1963) and *Sociology and Pragmatism*, op.

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His introductions to these books, plus three other pieces he wrote on Mills in this period,[8] are good surveys of Mills' intellectual development, ideas, and politics. In rereading Horowitz's early essays, it is easy to spot his enthusiasm for Mills the man, thinker, and actor, and for the public potential of sociology represented in Millsian projects. But a closer examination also reveals that Horowitz always separated ends from means, celebrating Mills' moral character and sociological methods without appreciative regard for their substantive ends. Horowitz's "new sociology" represented the professionalization of Mills while his new biography on Mills represents the professional debunking of Mills.

Horowitz's opening sentence in his introduction to Mills' essays asks "What was the 'magic' which C. Wright Mills possessed? Why did he become the singular intellectual 'hero' of our age? How did he come to influence a generation of scholars, students and savants while at the same time suffering the outrages of ostracism and hostility from many professional sociologists?"[9] He answers that it was because Mills, with his pragmatic toughmindedness, honesty, and courage, took social knowledge seriously as a rational force in human affairs. Mills embodied "critical intelligence" pitted against the "higher immorality"; and, in order "To reach this critical intelligence, Mills called upon the 'classic tradition' — rational and enlightened tradition, to which mind is autonomous and independent of power but, nonetheless, morally related to the mainsprings of social growth."[10] The "message of the greatest sociologist the United States ever produced" was Mills' commitment to a "public sociology" which "confronts the facts with integrity, and confirms the integrity by doing something about the facts."[11]

Horowitz clearly admired Mills' reconciliation of American pragmatism, with its orientation toward truth, as action, with the classic tradition of European philosophy. Mills was valued because he sought to make sociology a publicly-relevant social science existing independently of power and establishment values. Yet Horowitz never really takes up the substantive issues raised by Mills, such as whether the Cuban revolution was good or bad and why, or whether his portrait of "cheerful robots" was an accurate analysis of contemporary alienation. It was not the content of the debates that interested Horowitz as much as it was Mills' "conscientiousness" in addressing himself "to the great agonies and issues of our age."[12] Horowitz elaborates at length

cit.; and *The New Sociology: Essays in Social Science and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills*, edited by Irving L. Horowitz (New York, 1964).

8. Irving L. Horowitz, "The Unfinished Writings of C. Wright Mills: The Last Phase," *Studies on the Left*, 3:4 (1963), 3-23; "C. Wright Mills' White collar," (New York, 1967) which is a Study Master "analytic notes and review" for college student consumption, the price of which was $1.00, only 75¢ less than the book itself, an obvious bargain for students in the "knowledge factory"; and "Max Weber and the Spirit of American Sociology," *Professing Sociology* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 186-194.

9. Irving L. Horowitz, "An Introduction to C. Wright Mills," *Power, Politics, and People*, op. cit., p. 1.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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on Mills' commitment to applying reason to freedom, agreeing that "The essential tasks of the social scientist, beyond explaining the beliefs that motivate men, is to urge a course of action based on knowledge rather than opinions."[13] Mills' "sociological imagination" was important because it "urgently" recognized "that the great struggle of the age was shaping up as a context between alternative modes of settling human affairs: was settlement to be brought about through knowledge or through force, through science or dogma, through informed technology or mechanical technique."[14] Like Mills, Horowitz lamented that those in positions of power and responsibility, including those in the cultural apparatus, had defaulted and had not spoken out against the "great agonies and issues."

In his "Introduction to *The New Sociology*" Horowitz made it clear that the significance of Mills and the politics of the new decade were primarily in the creation of a "new sociology" informed by and informing public issues.[15] The new sociology was first of all to reject "value-free empiricism" characteristic of the post-war sociologists. In order to admit social philosophy into sociology and to address public issues, "The forging of a valuable sociology depends in part on the creation of a social science of values."[16] Yet Horowitz does not spell out those values which are worth debating or defending, stating only that "The problem of meaning inheres in every sociologically significant concept and is at the same time a moral dilemma."[17] Released from the objectivism of fact, the new sociology can become the leader of the social science of the "wide range."[18]

What Horowitz envisioned was a "modernization" of sociology, breaking it free of the provinciality of narrow empiricism and mundane problems of the middle-range, and resuscitating the concerns of classic social philosophy in the new contexts of national and international capitalism. Narrow academic professionalism was rejected in favor of a "truly public sociology of the big picture," utilizing historically-comparative studies, the classic tradition of Western philosophy, issues of value pluralism and moral paradox, and interdisciplinary perspectives and tools. Sociology would not be a servant of power or policy, nor presumably publics or social movements, but would function "as a critic of policy."[19] While Horowitz is knowledgeable of public issues he is

13. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *The New Sociology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-48
16. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
18. "The master problems for a modern sociology — the multiplication of social forms of capitalism and socialism, the social costs and benefits of economic development, the new nationalism and the rise of polycentric doctrines of socialism, the relation of radical competition to democratic norms, the connection between industrial life and anomic responses, the problems of world population and human health, and, above all, the question of world conflict and conflict resolution — these are large-scale problems. They are not simply newspaper headlines, but are, in fact, matters which occupy the attention of many and diverse professional publics. Sociology has an obligation, first and foremost, to reflect upon the problems dealt with at the level they occur, and to provide the information and the theory for social solutions to human problems." *Ibid.*, p. 21.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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always quick to disassociate this publicization of sociology from the culture and politics of individuals, movements, and parties. Ignoring the important political constitution or vitalization of ideas in everyday life and institutions, Horowitz identifies the public-validity of the new sociology in its links with social philosophy (the classics) on the one hand and with the critique of "policy" on the other.

Concluding his argument for the new sociology, Horowitz wrote of Mills that "Perhaps the final judgment on Mills will be: Here was a man whose integrity made it easier for the rest of us to speak out; whose honesty made it easier for the rest of us to be honest. When social science is tied to social responsibility, the legacy of Mills will be realized."[20] Mills and his legacy and presumably the new sociology, would rest on old-fashioned Protestant virtues — personal integrity and honesty — linked to the pragmatic man's social responsibility. While a decent enough protrait of Mills, it said nothing about Mills' struggle to be a fully-developed social individual in a properly-developed, democratic society. Mills was portrayed less as the legitimate hero in the struggle against the rationalization of everyday life, and more as the model of the necessary personally-formal characteristics of the "new sociologist." While resting on formalized Protestant foundations, the new sociology would engage the policies of the powerful — but for what ends?

In his early writings on Mills and the new sociology, Mills' importance was not as bearer of radical intellectual traditions, normative ideals, or his central critical theme of the rationalization of the individual and democracy. What inspired Horowitz was Mills' "sociological imagination" stripped of content, becoming the instrumentally-rational framework for a modernized, international sociology. Horowitz positively addressed Mills' pragmatic tough-mindedness with its intellectual honesty and moral courage, his use of social philosophy within an interdisciplinary focus on problems, his theory of power as the central fact of society linked to the necessity of an independent social science to counter that power. Yet Horowitz was silent on Mills' efforts to criticize human alienation and the rationalization of reason as bureaucratic power, and his effort to link critical knowledge to publics and social movements with the substantive goal of a new social individuality and democratization. Mills was used to justify the empowerment of reason as an independent force, in order to justify sociology itself as an independent professional public within the university as part of a new, modernized system of pluralized power. Horowitz was to complete the project of pragmatic professionalization that Dewey had begun, but to which Mills had spent his life in opposition. Moreover, all the positive qualities that Horowitz admired in Mills as "the greatest sociologist America has produced," such as integrity, honesty, and public responsibility, would later vanish in his biographical portrait of Mills whose mean-spiritedness, deviancy, and utopian longings were incommensurate with the requirements of modern society and professional discourse.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

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Mills' Protestant virtues important for Horowitz in the sixties became the irrational adversary culture of the intellectuals in the eighties.

Horowitz's new sociology, riding the wave of Mills' popularity and of popular struggles in the sixties, justified the ascendance and autonomy of sociology and the social sciences in the universities. Horowitz became a central figure in the rise of what Alvin Gouldner critically celebrated as a "new class" of thinkers representing a "culture of critical discourse."[21] This new ideology of social scientific intellectuals, stimulated by new postwar conflicts and state funding, quickly purged politics and empowered culture as an independent social science. The major center for the new sociology in the sixties was Washington University in St. Louis where "critical discourse" was objectified by Alvin Gouldner in *Transaction*, a magazine which popularized the ideas and findings of social science to professional, middle-class audiences. One of Gouldner's partners in this project was Horowitz, also at Washington University, who by the late sixties "took" *Transaction* with him to Rutgers University as editor-in-chief while also claiming to be the magazine's founder. The magazine was renamed *Society* and began focusing on middle-range issues functional for public administration. At Rutgers, Horowitz also created a new consortium of social science journals and a publishing press, thus establishing his goal of a professionally-independent social science, claiming to be relatively independent of politics while exercising some influence over them.[22]

At the end of the sixties Horowitz was writing that the popular passions and struggles of everyday life, particularly the actions of the student movement to politicize issues of self and culture, were instances of collective irrationalism, of a radicalism that had "revolted against reason."[23] What Horowitz had celebrated earlier in Mills as his pragmatic capacity to unite feeling to knowledge, and knowledge to action, as an intellectual politics appropriate for a bureaucratic society, was deemed irrational when everyday actors did the same. Like so many of his political generation who had come to associate popular movements with the rise of totalitarianism in Europe, Horowitz identified the power of reason with the classics of philosophy and an independent professional class, bearers of the new sociology secured in universities. The university was Horowitz's model of reason and of the public sphere, distanced

21. Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York, 1979).

22. Always associating himself with the best minds of his generation (Mills, Gouldner), Horowitz became the Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University. Arendt, like Mills and Gouldner, provided perfect legitimation for the new professionalized social scientific intelligentsia. What was repressed was that Arendt, much like Mills, but less so Gouldner, disliked American universities and thought them inappropriate places for independent thinkers and also wrote primarily for political publics in response to pressing political issues, what she called the "crises of the republic." On Hannah Arendt and these matters, cf. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's fine biography, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven, 1982).

23. See the new Preface to his *Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason* (Carbondale, Ill., 1968), pp. v.-xviii; and his book on the student movement written with William H. Friedland, *The Knowledge Factory* (Carbondale, Ill., 1972), especially the chapter "The Ideology of Student Rebellion," pp. 89-117.

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from the irrationality of "power, politics, and people."[24] Social science, with sociology as its center, would provide professional knowledge to constrain power and passion.

IV

After a twenty year hiatus, Horowitz writes a biography of Mills which discredits his mode of intellectual work. The biography does not attempt to interpret the meaning of Mills' work in terms of thematic continuities or substantive goals (as Tilman did), does not critically examine the substance of Mills' work in terms of its contributions to contemporary social thought and politics, and does not draw upon or debate recent interpretations of Mills written by a new generation of scholars and critics. The book incorporates all his earlier essays on Mills (appropriately edited to remove earlier sentimental identification or accolades), new biographical research (consulting Mills' old associates and correspondence, but not his family or close friends), and adds new summary-style expositions of Mills' works with nonpolemical coverage of the reviews written by Mills' sociological colleagues.[25] Packed like a scrapbook, lacking substantive themes, assuming that esoteric rhetoric and psychological insights will unite the patchwork, the biography structurally differentiates Mills' life and work into "settings," which traces Mills' relationship to American universities; "sources," which traces the influence of the European classics on Mills and "substances," which belabors Mills' works with extensive summaries and the opinions of his university colleagues. Under a veil of professional neutrality and empirical documentation, Horowitz dismembers and disposes of his old mentor and friend. Mills, once useful for the legitimation of a theory of the new sociologists as a professional class, is now debunked as a solipsistic utopian.

The book is introduced with reference — not to intellectual problems — but to the problem of writing "social science biographies," as uncharted intellectual territory. Horowitz implies that his study of Mills is sort of a new subdiscipline: the new intellectual history of sociologists by sociologists. But it turns out to be really a biography of a "mature" social science whose civility was interrupted by a deviant "utopian" who marginalized himself from the professional community. What holds the biography together, then, aside from Horowitz's inflated reputation as "this country's preeminent authority on C. Wright Mills," (dust jacket cover) is a new theme, not present in his sixties' pieces, of Mills, "an American utopian."[26] "Utopian" was a term popularly

24. *Professing Sociology* (Chicago, 1968), p. 2.

25. One of the many disappointing features of the biography is that it relies heavily on Horowitz's earlier work on Mills without any substantive reinterpretation and on the published book review judgments of a select group of prestigous, mainline sociologists of Horowitz's own generation. Unlike Tilman, Horowitz does not consult or debate the relatively vast "underground" literature that has been done on Mills and which is of first rate quality. Horowitz apparently now expects to be consulted as Mills' preeminent biographer rather than having to either consult or debate the wisdom of a new generation of scholars.

26. Mills was an utopian "in the broad sense that he continued, against all odds, to believe that social theory must contain a moral edge, and that such an edge was locked into the primal belief that change in human beings can be for the better and not just random . . . . Indeed, as his

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and perjoratively used against Mills in the fifties by his critics who did not understand the practicality or scientific objectivity of uniting ideals and facts, knowledge and action. Horowitz utilizes this theme in a similar way, portraying Mills as an impractical dreamer who attempted more than he could humanly accomplish, who allowed his inflated sense of personal destiny to undercut his sociological imagination, whose passionate intellectual activism lost touch with the reason of professional discourse, who became a generally unliked person, and who was a social deviant who delighted in the theatricality of shock.

The hidden agenda of the book is to deflate the myth of Mills as a hero of intellectual activism, a myth it should be remembered that Horowitz himself helped to establish after Mills' death to legitimate the new sociology. Horowitz now subjects Mills to the same critique he had earlier devloped on Sorel and the student new left; that they represent a brand of subjective, emotional, and romantic radicalism which is a revolt against reason. Instead of showing that Mills' "radicalism" was a function of normative commitments to moral individualism, craftsmanship, and Jeffersonian democracy, and as utilized in a critical theory combining Veblen's ideas on capitalism and Weber's on rationalization, Horowitz argues that Mills' "utopianism" emanated from his character, his over-passionate pragmatism, and personal deviance. Mills' "utopianism" is not theorized as the rational political outcome of the dialogue between Protestant liberalism and bureaucratic capitalism, as Tilman had done, but as the outcome of a romantic individual who found himself out of place in a progressively modern world. In this latter schema, the issues raised by Mills are portrayed to emanate more from the character of his passion and personality than from the world itself. By method of his own ironic detachment from Mills, Horowitz commits what he claims became the chief flaw of Mills: the loss of reason and a corresponding loss of objective reality.

Mills went to four universities — Texas and Wisconsin as a student during the Depression, and Maryland and Columbia as a professor during and after the war. Mills clearly evolved a love-hate relationship with professional sociology and university life. Horowitz's purpose is not to trace Mills' intellectual and political development within a theory of the Progressive, New Deal academicization of knowledge, a theory which Mills had developed in his dissertation on pragmatism and used as a critique of the university, but to show in a descriptive and gossipy way how Mills was formed as a marginal academic whose quarrelsome personality and political involvements outside of the university conflicted with the civilized reason of his university colleagues. Here

work became more strident, losing sight of the distinction between analytical research and journalistic blandishment, the turn toward the utopian became even more manifest." (p. 7) And "Anyone attempting to bite the world whole, rather than be content with chewing at one small piece, represents, by that effort, something of a utopian. However, it was not simply his holistic vision but his movement among philosophical, sociological, political, and cultural themes that stamped him as a utopian. The boundaries of intellectual space were made to yield to the outer limits of big pictures and even bigger visions." (p. 8) And on his personality, Horowitz writes: "his manipulation of deviance was a device to stretch professional discourse to its limits" (p. 4); and there was "near-unanimous negative consensus about him." (p. 4).

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Horowitz plants the seeds of a continuing critique of Mills: that he was mistaken in his belief that the university had become politically-rationalized for bureaucratic capitalism as pragmatic Progressivism, and that his intellectualization of his professional role by writing-speaking directly for publics undermined his own commitment to reason. Horowitz does not submit his own assumptions to a direct debate with Mills, and represses Mills' own theoretical or political motives for his actions within universities with a focus on Mills' personality and ambitions and on the relationship of deviancy and marginality.

Horowitz makes it clear that "A university is a special institution. Although it is linked to industry, the military, or the polity, it retains a peculiar resilience which keeps it from becoming captive to other agencies of power. Partially, this is because the university is concerned with knowledge, and knowledge does not respect boundaries invented by politicians or enforced by militarists. A university is also a source and not just a reflection of power" (13). Yet much of the material of these chapters, especially when viewed in the light of Mills' own work on the subject, reveals that this was generally not the case. The New Deal with its Deweyian liberalism and progressive intervention into all social sectors to rationally integrate society, to restructure the economy into a more politically-commanding and bureaucratic form, effected the University of Texas as well as Columbia. Liberal doctrines from both the New Deal and the pragmatism professional movement came through Mills' major professors at Texas: Ayres in economics, Gettys in sociology, and Gentry and Miller in philosophy. From these progressive scholars, Mills learned to appreciate the problems of America as a national political economy shaped by institutional rather than market economics, and that pragmatism had become a philosophy of actions representing the political integration of capitalism. Horowitz, biased toward the assumption of the autonomy of the new social sciences within the universities, fails to understand that the university as a Platonist sanctuary had long been transformed into the pragmatic ideal of state service and action. Horowitz equates the professionalization of knowledge with its autonomy from power, while Mills always analyzed this professionalization with the default of the liberal ideal of knowledge emerging from the dialogue between politically-independent writers and publics.

At Wisconsin, one of the most Progressive universities of the time, with new programs in labor relations and community development, Horowitz writes that "Mills had chosen a school that probably best exemplified the democratic tradition in American higher education. Surely no university in America placed greater emphasis on interdisciplinary and innovative research while maintaining absolute adherence to academic and civil liberties" (41). Professionalized and progressive, interdisciplinary and research-oriented, directed at policy-relevant areas, is Horowitz's ideal of autonomous knowledge. Yet he does not show how Mills was analyzing and debunking this knowledge as value-laden and instrumental to the control logic of the new bureaucratic society, thus breaking practical reason's link between means and ends. Iron-

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ically, Horowitz discusses but does not draw this point from Mills' "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists" essay which critically interpreted the professional sociology of social problems literature as nothing but small-town liberalism boiled down to a social psychology of interpersonal adjustment within restricted milieus, ignorant of both nationally-structured power and classic liberal ideals.

Much of Mills' thinking at this time was influenced by Hans Gerth, the German emigré from the University of Frankfurt who passed onto Mills the classics of European social thought, the Weberian-Frankfurt School thesis of rationalization, the dialectic of enlightenment (immediately applicable to the fate of American pragmatism), and the new and dangerous phenomenon of the militarized state. Mills began applying this framework to pragmatism, the professionalization of knowledge and politics, and the American as a friendly "behemoth." Unable to appreciate the impact of these ideas on Mills' own work and actions at Wisconsin and later, Horowitz makes too much of his acerbic and hostile interpersonal relations with his colleagues, including Gerth, underinterpreting the social meaning of his "anti-academic polemic" (46). In Horowitz's judgment Mills was an "Ishmael in North Star Country" (the chapter title for the Wisconsin years) or "outcast" because he failed to appreciate the university as a citadel of reason and democracy.

While at Maryland, a state university which "was a unique benefactor of the New Deal boom in higher education," (59) Mills sharpened his ideas on the political significance of intellectuals and began writing for the "little" political magazines: *Politics*, *The New Leader*, *The New Republic*, and *Partisan Review*. As Horowitz reports, "Mills saw everything through the prism of the 'intellectual' . . . urged on by his strange love-hate relationship with university life and its denizens . . ." (63) In a letter to Gerth, Mills outlined his agenda with the goal of creating "a path for thinking and thinkers that avoids the bureaucratization of thought" (64). Mills cultivated new relationships outside of the university, preferring the company of intellectuals in philosophic groups, the issue of wartime politics, and engaging in critiques of the state's offical abuse of liberalism. Writing in the little magazines, he claimed that liberalism's goals had become formalized with no substantive moral power, and that there were no institutional means for the democratic implementation of its ideals. In the new society of institutionalized power, the conformity of the individual, the professionalization of knowledge, and the state's rhetorical use of liberalism to hide its default, Mills counterposed the truth power of intellectuals whose responsibility he saw was to unmask the public lies which sustained irresponsible power.

Mills expanded his relationships and intellectual functions at Columbia where in 1944-45 he began writing for Bell's *New Leader*, became acquainted with the New York literary intellectual crowd (Macdonald, Rahv, and Howe) and the Frankfurt School refugees (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Lazarsfeld); and began his first Columbia project — a study of New York City's Puerto Ricans — as contract research for the Bureau of Applied Social

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research under Paul Lazarsfeld. Mills had cultivated mutually respectful and close relationships with many professors at Columbia and with the independent New York intellectuals. But by the mid-fifties most of these relations had deteriorated into acrimony and recrimination which made the "Ishmael" once again marginal: "His criticism of departmental colleagues, university-wide associates, and his own university administrators — not for technical but for ideological reasons — ultimately became the root source of a deeply felt hostility toward Mills . . . . He coveted the status and the glory of elite institutions while despising their snobbery and style" (83). It is likely that Mills came to Columbia hoping to find a great public university in the classic sense, in the most cosmopolitan of cities, but found instead, that its reigning virtues were professionalism, illiberal practicality, professorial mandarinism, and the uncritical defense of the American state. Mills' "abrasive" relations with his colleagues, his outspoken character, and "marginality," were the result of the default of the university as an independent institution of public reason linked to publics, not the fault of Mills the man.

The problem with New York City's professors, as Mills saw it, was that the sociologists had become bureaucratized with their grantsmanship and fetishization of technique, coupled to an unreflexive theory of abstracted empiricism and grand theorizing, while the left, such as Trilling and Bell, had become conformist celebrators of post-war state capitalism. By the late fifties Mills' persistent criticism of his colleagues and political friends, for their default of the independent role of reason and culture, had earned him their enmity, if not his excommunication from their colleagiality. His reply was *The Sociological Imagination* which was a critique of the above-mentioned trends within the prestigious Columbia sociology department and the little political magazines. However, the book was more than a critique for it also celebrated the classic ideals of moral individualism, craftsmanship, and democratic publics. As Horowitz observes, the book was not favorably accepted, which "left Mills with a permanent sense of estrangement, not simply from his peers at the university but from the field as such" (99). While some of this is true, Horowitz cannot avoid the insinuation that Mills created his own alienation as in the statement that "a corresponding acerbic tone which crept into his work earned Mills the ridicule of his profession and destroyed the last vestiges of personal kindness or civility toward him that still existed at Columbia" (108). Horowitz concludes that it was Mills' self-imposed alienation from his profession that then led him to seek "satisfaction from a small circle of friends and associates far from Morningside Heights" (83). But if all this was so, how then could Horowitz have announced back in the early sixties that Mills was "the singular intellectual hero of our times" and then organize a *Feschrift* with twenty-nine appreciative professors. Unfortunately, Horowitz reduces Mills' work to the interpersonal struggle of academic identities and ambitions: as in the absurd statement that because "his sense of scholarly worth was seriously injured" (83), Mills retreated from the university to explore "problems of

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social change and political revolution" (108). Of course, the reverse was more to the truth.

By focusing on character, Horowitz undercuts any attempt at objective portrayal. Mills is always the preformed outsider and deviant whose inability to be a "mainliner" drove him to excess in an otherwise reasonable, civil world. Horowitz makes to much of the significance of academic politics and acrimony as a pre-given, determining reality, placing latent blame on the troublesome outsider, rather than in analyzing why the professionalized university has difficulty in tolerating independent criticism and action. Nor does Horowitz seek to explain or take a position on the reasons for this postwar intolerance of figures like Mills. Moreover, while Horowitz shows Mills as one who was torn between the conflicting roles of professional sociologist and independent intellectual, he does not indicate how Mills attempted to fuse these two roles as part of his larger argument that the "sociological imagination" had replaced the literary imagination (the reference to Trilling) by nature of the institutionalization of society itself. Nor does Horowitz appreciate how this model of the sociological intellect, however inflated or incorrect, emanated from Mills' unique configuration of character and ideology which conflicted with the logic of rationalization and conformity so characteristic of his settings. Finally, it is unfortunate that Horowitz separated Mills' institutional development from his intellectual development and his works because the former does not make sense without the ideas and motives that Mills brought to and developed within universities as that pragmatic project of uniting knowledge and practice.

Without a substantive portrait of the complex interplay between ideas and action, Horowitz reduces Mills to the same simple-minded, negative stereotypes held of him by others during his lifetime. It seems that Horowitz no longer needs to defend his "intellectual hero" of the sixties from the older muddled criticism because these now fit his mature image of Mills and of his incompatibility with a fully-modernized sociology. But, as Mills knew, when narrative is reduced to social pathology, or to a struggle between "marginals" and "mainliners," the objectivity of reality and its issues disappears, a key problem for a professionally-modern sociology and its biographers.

Horowitz's diminution of the social objectivity of Mills' ideas and involvements is further revealed in his treatment of the influence of pragmatism and the classic tradition on Mills. Offering no elaborated discussion of Veblen, Dewey (or Mead), liberalism, or American traditions of craftsmanship, individualism, and democracy, Mills is portrayed as the volitional, experiencing, pragmatic intellectual (a "Jamesian man") who eclectically appropriated the ideas of Mannheim, Weber, and Marx to empower his conception of intellectuals.[27] Mills was the free-swinging activist who took whatever ideas he needed to engage the powerful. While there is some obvious truth to this characteriza-

27. The omission of these thinkers (especially Veblen) and traditions is not only a major oversight, but seriously weakens the scope and validity of the biography; that is, it weakens Horowitz's claim of undertaking a full-scale biography.

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tion, Horowitz underplays the great themes of Western culture that came to Mills through the European classics: the liberal notion of enlightenment through reason and culture; and the twentieth-century crisis of reason and freedom brought on by capitalist and bureaucratic rationalization, especially the formal reification of culture and power. Yet, the strength of these chapters is that Horowitz unintentionally shows that Mills' incorporation of Western liberal traditions within the framework of American pragmatism increasingly separated Mills from his university colleagues who had turned toward a functionalist and technical-interventionist response to the social crisis. What Mills "took" from pragmatism and the European classics was a theory Mills referred to as "The Crisis of Social Reflection" in his introduction to the "classic tradition,"[28] a theory of the generalization of alienation from the factory to everyday life and knowledge, producing a seemingly-irrevocable split between thought and action.

The classic definition of pragmatism as the truth-testing of moral intentionality through practical experience and responsibility is but a restatement of the liberal ideal of uniting reason and freedom through the mediation of normative ideals and practical technique. In contrast to Tilman who understands the significance of this model for Mills, Horowitz splits pragmatism into inductive experience and professionalized reform which he links backward to the progressive tradition of muckraking and reform. In the first sense, then, Horowitz inaccurately asserts that Mills always valued experience and culture over reason and society: "For him learning was always a firsthand experience, rarely a reflective derivation from other sources in the sociological literature" (128). In contrast, Horowitz comes closer to the truth where he writes that pragmatism was a conception of involvement and struggle, of the assertion of the individual will: in *The New Men of Power* and *White Collar*, Mills "saw the plight of intellectuals, ideologically at least, as a global loss of nerve and a blunting of that cutting edge best typified in the thought of Dewey and Mead, as well as Marx and Freud. It was the fighting spirit rather than doctrinal irregularities which always captivated Mills" (137). Yet this fighting spirit emanated in an internal dialogue with tradition and the European classics. Horowitz only occasionally captures this in statements such as "The concept of a pragmatic life meant tough-minded pursuit of democratic lifestyles. This would give the articulate and knowlegeable public the help needed to keep leaders of society responsive and responsible" (138). Yet unlike Mills, Horowitz refrains from theorizing the character and crisis of society which objectively justified the idealism of pragmatic activism.

If pragmatism was an ideology justifying the union and testing of knowledge through action, as an expression of classic liberalism, the crisis of liberal society in the thirties was the professional appropriation of knowledge as a managerial tool for the functional integration of a national capitalist society. From the thirties to the sixties, Mills witnessed the reification of pragmatism

28. C. Wright Mills, "Introduction: The Classic Tradition," *Images of Man* (New York, 1960), p. 7.

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as the outlook of the New Deal state and the professions. In its new social form, removed from individuals and publics, pragmatism justified the rational specialization of functions in terms of sequences for abstracted wholes under the superordinate guidance of experts and as veiled through an ideology of value-neutrality and growth. The unity between thought and action once guaranteed by the individual and the public was broken and restructured through the institutional intervention of a professional-managerial class: planning and execution were now reified as distinctions between a bureaucratic managing class and a socially-fractured consuming class.

Glossing over much of Mills' theory of all this, Horowitz portrays Mills as obsessed with a pragmatism of experiential truth and muckraking activism. And in a contradictory way, Horowitz claims that Mills abandoned pragmatism when it became part of the state and cultural apparatus and sought truth in the "classic tradition," and on the other hand, became increasingly a political activist in the American muckraking tradition acting without the constraints of reason that the classics should have imposed. Neither is true: Mills always held on to the liberal core of pragmatism, and as Tilman argued, it was the continuing source of Mills' radical theorizing and activism; and he never abandoned the classics for instrumental action but continually sought to unify classic ideals and models in new forms of action (the "new left"). In fact, the last four or so years of his life when new political opportunities were opening up in which he was becoming more personally involved was also a period that continued to pursue the classics in new ways (cf. *The Marxists*, and *Images of Man*).

Mannheim's influence on Mills was in providing the sociology of knowledge as a justification for Mills' conception of the independent role of intellectuals in human affairs. Horowitz denigrates this, portraying Mills as a Mannheimian, "free-floating" intellectual who became the "victim of the classic delusion of intellectual hubris that today's problems lie with the world who dares not take me seriously" (149). According to Horowitz, the sociology of knowledge allowed Mills to both understand and transcend the social-boundedness of knowledge, imparting to privileged intellectuals the power to escape the social constraints normally placed on knowledge as interests. The social marginality of the role of the intellectual guaranteed a form of knowledge that was free of specific interests and able to produce truths of specific historical epochs. Accordingly, this conception of the free-floating intellectual fitted in with Mills' anomic, experiential character and gave him an intellectual pretentiousness which was unrealistic and "utopian." This interpretation is misleading because, first, it overlooks that Mills was not anomic or marginal, but consciously worked squarely within the mainstream normative traditions of Western society. Second, it was not the task of the sociology of knowledge simply to expose narrow interests, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to expose the normative truths which are repressed or exist in contradiction to evolving institutional centers of power. In this situation it was the responsibility of intellectuals, not to be elitist symbols of transcendent truth, but to

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reflect on society in terms of its own historically-specific ideals. It is not the case, as Horowitz argues, that "The most (*sic*) marginal the intellectual is, the more likely to plant seeds of knowledge and learning. The very marginality keeps one relatively immune from ideological dogmatism and utopian messianism" (152).

Horowitz predictably ignores the theory of functional rationalization that inspired Mannheim's and Mills'-theory of intellectuals. The institutional socialization of society as bureaucratic-monopoly capitalism broke the traditional moral interdependence of self and everyday life (which had not required intellectuals) and left the individual without the knowledge and political mediations necessary for understanding and controlling society. Knowledge became the exclusive domain of technicians in what Mills termed the "cultural apparatus" which bombarded and controlled alienated consumers with empirically abstracted products and entertainments. The cultural intelligentsia — writers, artists, designers, engineers — had lost the ability of representing society's interests and became functional specialists producing and marketing standardized goods to alienated consumers ("cheerful robots"). This state of affairs required intellectuals whose knowledge would not be reduced to instrumental action and who could still represent society's interests and ideals to citizens in democratic publics. Rather than being free-floating of interest, the intellectual was to be the most committed to the ideological truths of a society — what both Mannheim and Mills referred to as "substantial reason" — and expose the repression of truth and social interest by the bureaucratic centralization of political power and culture. Thus, Mills' concern for the sociology of knowledge and knowledge-guided action was as a justification for the public, democratic role of the intellectual as a counter to institutional rationalization and cultural opaqueness.

It was precisely this role of the intellectual and of the "sociological imagination" which transcended small scale milieu to the institutional structure of society that justified the label of "utopian" to Mills' work. And it is this "utopian" character of the intellectual that Horowitz has become most ambivalent about, portraying utopian intellectuals as marginal men overwhelmed by their own pretentiousness. And in the name of the very populism that functional sociology has long repressed, Horowitz concludes that Mills' appropriation of Mannheim's ideas represented a "flawed," "perhaps even crippling," vision: this was Mills' portrayal of ordinary men and women as "cheerful robots." According to Horowitz, Mills used this concept to enforce his own marginality from the mainstream: to reinforce his own conception as a "great man," and thus "was forced to separate himself from mere mortals whom he tended to denigrate" (168). Here Horowitz upholds the "structured survey research" of other sociologists who produced portraits of Americans who were happy and in control of their lives. In this view Horowitz renounces the very "substantial reason" that Mills and Mannheim claimed to be at the heart of the classic tradition as well as its civic responsibility.

Weber's influence on Mills, surely one of the most important in addition to

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Veblen, is treated sketchily in a fifteen page chapter (out of a total of 331 pp.) which is more of a Horowitzian discourse on American sociology than on the great Weberian themes of bureaucratic rationalization and class/status/power and their central impact on Mills' own thinking about American society. Weber's impact on the post-war development of American sociology was far-reaching and yielded two different interpretations. The first was led by Parsons and Merton as a Weberian theory of functional differentiation, professionalization, with mid-range research on problems of functional adaptation. Created as an alternative to Marx, Weber became the acceptable model of value-neutral scholasticism which grappled with problems amenable to administrative solutions. The second was Mills' liberal pragmatization of Weber, seeing in Weber an intellectual engaged in the great discourse of Western culture, who infused ethics and responsibility into politics. Mills incorporated Weber's ideas regarding rationalization and the central role of authority in the moral structuring of institutions and society, and the thesis of the technical legitimation of bureaucratic authority which aborted moral individualism and democracy.

Horowitz's theme is that Mills' interpretation of Weber alienated him from the neo-Weberians who dominated the sociological establishment — Parsons, Shils, Lipset, and Bendix. In an unbelievable interpretation, Horowitz explains this rift and the extreme animosity that the Neo-Weberians had for Mills in terms of Mills' own abandonment of Weber's liberal or Protestant assumptions. In other words, Horowitz claims that Mills had completely abandoned liberalism (the core foundation of Weberianism) by the late fifties so that "By the time Mills produced *The Marxists*, his animosity toward liberalism and his rejection of this 'creed' for Marxism was so complete that any further serious consideration of Weber was out of the question" (186). This is nonsense: Mills never abandoned liberalism or Weber's theories of methodology, all of which lie at the heart of his work up to his death. But by stating this falsehood, Horowitz can once again blame Mills for his own ostracism from the discipline of sociology which continued to uphold the proper Protestant spirit within American sociology (which is presumably value-neutral scholarship). The reverse is more likely the truth: what distinguished Mills from the Neo-Weberians was Mills' liberally-positioned critique of irresponsible power while the neo-Weberians engaged in scientifically-detached scholarship. Mills' was the Protestant-grounded conception of moral responsibility while the neo-Weberians had succumbed to the logic of functional rationalization as "modernization" which their objective scholarship sought to illuminate.

With regard to Marx, Horowitz concludes there was little influence on Mills and that he only took up the question of the political relevance of Marxism in the early sixties as the pragmatic intellectual's response to new political developments (movement in the third world, changes in Eastern Europe, and Western anti-nuclear politics). While Mills had been introduced to Marxism as a graduate student at Texas and Wisconsin and written for the nation's lead-

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ing socialist journals since the forties as an independent leftist, so that one can conclude that the spirit and debates of Marxism penetrated his work, Mills did not take up the formal study of Marxism until his book on the subject in 1962.[29]

In a statement contradicting his earlier claim that Mills had jettisoned liberalism altogether, Horowitz writes of *The Marxist* that "The pluralist, the person receptive to new ideas, the person interested in the social uses of social science — in short, the classic liberal — must perforce interest himself or herself in Marxism because it is within its confines that liberalism fulfills itself" (195). Horowitz reduces the question of Marxism to a perspective within the classic tradition that the normatively-unconstrained liberal will freely choose to study. But for what ends? For Horowitz it is the methodological formalism of "fusing the liberal imagination with the sociological imagination" (195) that counts, not the substantive analysis of how certain ideals and models might shatter alienation and reunite reason and freedom. Horowitz can thus say of Mills that "At times it appeared that Mills cared less for the actual working out of socialism than for the clash of ideas generated by the emergence of a polycentric Marxism" (197). Mills would not have formally differentiated debates from issues of practice. Finally, Horowitz does not analyze the issues raised by *The Marxists* for the enlightenment and change of the crisis of Western society. Typically detached and defensive, he concludes that Mills only took up the question of neo-Marxisms in an instrumental way to revitalize the mission of intellectuals as a new class by and for itself. Mills is once again reduced to the opportunistic and idealist utopian.

The biography's final section on major books and "causes" obscures the Millsian problematic of the overorganized irresponsibility of power and the concomitant default of intellectuals to engage power and publics in a debate on substantive ends. Always the Deweyian, pragmatic moralist linking means to ends, Mills sought to engage social agents as publics, from his study of labor leaders to the new left, and concluded in the last years of his life that the intelligentsia might be significant as an independent movement (the theory of the new left). Horowitz does not engage Mills in a debate on the validity of these themes, providing only uncritical summaries of the books and of the judgments of his professional colleagues taken from professional book reviews, allowing the market "opinion" of professional peers to be the test of the work's validity. Horowitz adds his "revolt against reason" interpretation that Mills' work was professionally damaged by his abandonment of the classic tradition, scientific methodology, and the university in favor of pragmatic experience and political pamphleteering. Reducing issues and publics to Mills' solipsism, Horowitz portrays Mills as the "utopian" whose delusion was that the power of his own ideas could make a difference in human affairs.

*The New Men of Power*[30] depicted labor leaders as a new elite within a state-

29. C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists* (New York, 1962).
30. (New York, 1948).

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directed economy, whose rationalized roles detached them from the rank and file and prevented them from understanding the larger political economy. This institutionalization of leadership, as part of the new managerial division of labor removed from while directing popular action, was the beginning of his theory of power elites and masses. Mills concluded that labor leadership had lost any political independence that it might once have claimed to the New Deal state and that liberalism's rhetoric but not substance had legitimated the process of institutionalization. The study instituted Mills' life-long concern with the alienation of reason and freedom, or that of planning from execution, intellect from power, within work and everyday life due to the reification of institutional power over the everyday actions of masses. Mills himself represented the alienation of reason as the intellectual located institutionally within the university, while the labor leaders were divorced from both intellect (and normative tradition) and everyday action (the rank and file) by means of their functional positions within the new institutional hierarchy of state capitalism. Sidestepping Mills' theorization of the new phenomena of state capitalism and alienation, Horowitz interprets the study as the beginning of Mills' obsession with the linking of "his" concepts of truth and the "big picture" to power, of institutionalizing the reason of intellectuals as power. Mills' conception of the responsibility of reason to help citizens relink means and ends within work and everyday life escapes Horowitz's narrow professional vision, itself a victim of the very alienation that Mills sought to overcome.

*White Collar* is blandly summarized while its theoretical infrastructure is rejected.[31] Typically under the veil of neutrality, Horowitz argues that the book's theory of mass culture was a reflection, not of real events, but the frustration and alienation of intellectuals, who like Mills, increasingly resented their own removal or alienation from organized power and the everyday life of ordinary people.[32] The mass culture theorists (presumably the Frankfurt theorists and Hannah Arendt — whose name now distinguishes Horowitz's position) failed to appreciate the real benefits of economic growth and the new "middle" positions in class, culture, and politics which signified a new progressive era in American society. Horowitz approvingly cites numerous sociological studies which, lacking the breadth of *White Collar*, claimed to show the absence of cultural impoverishment premised by the critics of mass culture: "As Bennett Berger was to show later in the decade, it was by no means

31. The chapter on *White Collar* mechanically reproduces his 1967 "C. Wright Mills *White Collar:* A Critical Commentary," *op. cit.*, a literal and digestible summary of the book for the "study master" series produced for the mindless consumption by college students too lazy or mentally incapacitated to master the original. "Critical Commentary" refers not to any counter-interpretation or debate, but to a sampling of the opinions of mainstream sociologists.

32. Bennet Berger contributes an advertising blurb on the dust cover of the biography which states: ". . . a wonderfully clear picture of Mills' intellectual evolution . . . . I especially like Horowitz's understanding (and his ability to communicate) that the abrasiveness of Mills' personality was inextricably connected with his intellectual style and substance. It's a well-written book and a pleasure to read throughout." Here the old-man network of professionally-established sociologists drowns itself in mindless accolades.

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axiomatic that the new affluence of the new middle classes and their corresponding changes in life-style were either involuntary or a source of widespread discontent. And in politics as in culture, the swing to a middle ground spoke aptly for the rise of the middle class" (254). Truth now lies in statistical means, in the hump in the bell-shaped curve.

A better analysis would have showed that *White Collar* is a unique synthesis of liberal ideals, Weber's ideas on bureaucratic rationalization and class, Veblen's ideas on status and the predatory spirit, and the Frankfurt School's theory of mass society. If the white collar person was trapped in a bureaucratic iron-cage of functionalized positions it was also of their own making in their predatory pursuit of status differentiation and material acquisition, all of which resulted from the alienated imbalance between work and leisure. The white collar workers, cut off from older traditions of individualism and Jeffersonian democracy (an important theme which linked *White Collar* back to Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* and forward to Bellah's *Habits of the Heart*) were "masses" having neither independent private nor public lives due to their incorporation into the logic of bureaucratic work and capitalist consumerism. Consistent with the claims of the mass culture theorists, Mills argued that society had now become totalized into the lives of its citizens.

What most troubled Mills was the cultural and political consequences of this "institutional class" — the use of their own personalities as a factor in achieving competitive success at work and in leisure, thus contributing to their devaluation of the social realm (Mills' early contribution to the social theory of narcissism);[33] and their political indifference and apathy reflecting their inability and fear of shaping their world according to some set of ideals. In Mills' portrayal, the result of the loss of normative ideals and of public realm in which to shape the meaning of ideals in relation to social action was the "cheerful robot" whose functional imprisonment was made tolerable by the distractions of mass entertainment.

While Horowitz indicates that the book was well-received, and alongside Reisman's book, stimulated debates on individualism, he nonetheless selects those reviews and reactions that were less than pleased. Mills' critics had a different picture of post-war America: in contrast to the totalization of society under state monopoly capitalism into the life of the individual, they had an image of progressive affluence, professionalization, and technological beneficience which expanded positions and choices for a new middle class and led to a new social consensus. This was measured against the conflicts of the thirties and by the totalitarianism of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Thus, Dennis Wrong was disturbed by Mills' "strident contempt for the white-collar masses;" Dwight McDonald, Richard Hofstadter, and Lionel Trilling charged Mills with projecting his own alienation onto the white collar masses, with Hofstadter writing to Mills that "You have somehow managed to get into your portrait of the white collar man a great deal of your own personal nightmare,

33. C. Wright Mills, "The Competitive Personality," *Power, Politics, and People*, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-273.

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writing about him as though he must feel as you would feel if you were in his position" (251). To this Horowitz adds the comment that "Hofstadter's final shaft, after again declaring his admiration for Mills as a sociologist, was his serious reservations about Mills as a compassionate being. It is a line of criticism that was to be increasingly potent as a decade moved along" (251).

Horowitz quietly conforms to this criticism of *White Collar* by the New York sociological and literary establishment. Mills' harsh and stylized portrait of their alienation, paralleling the dramatic harshness and truth of *The Death of a Salesman*, clearly violated not the social realities of white collar people, but the new post-liberal, conservative sensibility that argued that post-war America was the best of all possible worlds. And those like Mills who denied America's new place in the sun were no longer red-baited, but were criticized for projecting their own alienated frustrations and utopian ideals onto ordinary people who were actually doing better in the cultural and political realms than had earlier generations. The social crisis of moral individualism and participatory democracy, of knowledge and publics, in short, of liberalism — the central and enduring themes of *White Collar* — were reduced to a problem of the solipsism of the intellectuals.

In contrast to the old New York left who had defined issues in terms of ideology and cultural sensibility, Mills began in *The New Men of Power* and *White Collar* to contribute to a new left theory of social structural reification the issues of which replaced the older ones of class and consciousness, and increasingly called into question the very possibility of social consciousness itself. Missing all this, Horowitz reiterates his claim that Mills was not concerned with the actual fate of working people or ideals, but only with the instrumental link between knowledge and power. In this view, Mills' was the bearer of the new adversary power and culture of the "new class" seeking to empower the intellect as against democratically-modernized authority. Horowitz thus represents the eighties' neo-conservative defense of society against one of its enemies: intellectual criticism of "progressive differentiation" in terms of the very liberal ideals that functional modernism had abandoned (the core of Mills' project).

As Tilman definitely showed, Mills had long been influenced by Veblen's institutional economics (and predatory power as a human instinct) which viewed power and its social institutionalization as an independent shaper of economic relations and forces. The study of the economy and the state were thus the analysis of the associational or institutional brokerage of power and authority rather than "economic or governmental" forces per se. Yet, contrary to Horowitz, Mills was never obsessed with power nor was institutional power the sole determiner of everything social or cultural. Mills always counterposed the equally autonomous and "powerful" character of knowledge and ideology, of the role of reason and debate in public affairs. The liberal project was always to transform power into publicly-accountable authority. These ideals of Veblen and Dewey were joined to those of Weber and the Ger-

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man emigrés (especially Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*)[34] to form the argument of *The Power Elite*.[35]

Like the prior two books, *The Power Elite* represented the change from liberal entrepreneurial capitalism to a corporate capitalism institutionally unified through bureaucracy. If classes had been atomized into masses, then economic markets and political associations had become bureaucratically unified and centralized. Properly understood as a theory of state capitalism closely modeled on that of Neumann's *Behemoth*, Mills argued that the state had assumed a corporate form through which the objectives of big business, the military, and executive politicians had become unitary. Mills thus extended the theory of institutional rationalization to the arena of the national state and politics, showing how the New Deal state had become national in political scope while institutionally inseparable from the permanent war economy. Echoing both the earlier fears of Tocqueville and the mass society theorists, Mills showed how the elimination of the middle levels of power, local political associations, independent political parties, and intellectuals, had reduced citizens to indifferent spectators of a corporate and military drama beyond their ordinary comprehension. *The Power Elite* thus combined Mills dual concerns with power and ideology, utilizing sociology as a tool to represent the new structure of power as reasoned analysis — while demystifying its conservative legitimations — as a critique of ideology.

From Horowitz's angle, *The Power Elite*'s major contribution was to "formulate essential questions of power and liberty and restore them to sociological inquiry" (257). Always reducing everything to a functional contribution to sociology, Horowitz misses the important impact the book had on the entire public debate on power and responsibility from the fifties to the sixties, impacting strongly on the student new left. Misunderstanding the book's intellectual origins and purpose, Horowitz reduces Mills' argument to the process of technological modernization and to the process of differentiation and centralization associated with the functional complexities of modern societies (rather than to the militarization of capitalism and the concomitant breakdown of liberal publics). It is not necessarily the case that Mills set himself the following task in the book: "concern with general conditions of 'modernity' rather than with 'capitalism.' " (262) Moreover, Mills' normative critique of the power elite, grounded as it was in the Jeffersonian and Tocquevillian ideal of power as associational or participatory, is interpreted by Horowitz as "reflect[ing] the mood of the decade of the fifties" (258) which for utopian intellectuals like Mills meant romantic nostalgia for a lost past of heroic individuals and inactive publics.

Horowitz cleverly legitimates *The Power Elite* as utilitarian for that very process of institutional reification that was the object of the book's critique. If normative critique is nostalgic romanticism, Horowitz can then safely conclude

34. (New York, 1942). See Mills' "The Nazi Behemoth," *Power, Politics, and People*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-178, for this influence.

35. (New York, 1956).

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that the book's importance was in its contribution to the thought and administrative intervention "of social science and public policy that the political process is the 'base' and the economic network the 'superstructure' " (280). Sifting through the reviews, Horowitz provides no substantive adjudication of the differences and controversies the book stimulated. And in ironic contradiction to his claim that the book decisively altered the social scientific study of power in America, Horowitz blandly concludes that the book "provided little in the way of theoretical innovation" (279). While he does not explain this assertion, it is presumed that Mills added little to functional theories of modernity.

In a painfully disappointing chapter on "the causes of C. Wright Mills," clearly written as a neoconservative discreditation of Mills, Horowitz pays homage to Mills' "near-uncanny sense of the central issues of the historical epoch," (290) but buries this under the theme that Mills turned these issues into personal causes which became "the penultimate step on his road to self-immolation" (292). By the late fifties, having completed the class trilogy while suffering increasing ostracism from the New York intellectual establishment, Mills began two interrelated lines of work: clarifying the role and ends of the intellectual — *The Sociological Imagination*, *Images of Man*, *The Marxists*:[36] and writing and speaking more directly on new international issues — the nuclearized cold war, third world underdevelopment, as related to his theory of the "fourth epoch" and the "new left" — *The Causes of World War Three*, *Listen, Yankee*![37] Not by any means *his* "causes," the issues of politically-organized capitalism and its permanent war economy went beyond human alienation into the international arena where he added his voice to others criticizing the insanity of the cold war and the impoverished dependency of imbalanced development. Always alienating the unity of Mills' theory and practice, Horowitz detaches the two works on international issues — *Causes*, and *Yankee* — from the evolution of this thought and from the other works of the period (on knowledge and responsibility) to conform to the thesis that Mills had lapsed into vulgar political pamphleteering because he had lost his sense of independent reason. Horowitz overlooks the fact that Mills had written on political causes since the early forties, especially through the essay form.[38]

*Causes* and *Yankee* were not well received by American thinkers and poli-

36. (New York, 1959), (New York, 1962), and (New York, 1962).

37. (New York, 1958), and (New York, 1960).

38. See *Power, Politics, and People*, *op. cit.* In addition to ignoring Mills' and Hans Gerth's *Character and Social Structure* (New York, 1953), and *The Sociological Imagination*, *op. cit.*, Horowitz does not analyze the theoretical and political evolution of Mills' essays nor the significance of the essay from for publics and public debate. Mills, always the self-conscious stylist of prose to enhance communication and interpretability, had mastered the essay form as a vehicle of political communication. Cf., for instance, his "Man in the Middle: The Designer," presented at the International Design Conference at Aspen, Colorado, in 1958, and reprinted in *Power, Politics, and People*, *op. cit.*, pp. 353-373. In this particular attempt to speak to educated publics beyond university professors, Mills addressed the "causes" of alienation and craftsmanship. By ignoring the continuity of intellectual politics in Mills' career, Horowitz can falsely claim that Mills, burned-out by the late fifties, abandoned the sociological imagination and picked up new political causes in international affairs in order to desperately maintain his "utopianism."

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ticans nor by Horowitz who dispenses with them as the projection of Mills' own frustration. The disagreement over these two works reveal the irony that Mills always saw America as a friendly version of the Nazi behemoth which restricted the freedom of its workers and citizens while imperializing the world under the security of its nuclear arsenal, while the conservative intellectuals (tired liberals) celebrated America as a civilized bastion of human and international rights, as the last defense against communist encroachment. Mills had essentially joined a European theory of mass society and militarization (derived from Gerth, Mannheim, and the Frankfurt School) to his own "native radicalism" and liberal sense of responsibility. It is from this perspective that Mills sought dialogues and alliances with intellectuals in the Soviet Bloc, Europe, and Latin America, and to reveal that the cold war and third world repression was a smokescreen for the aggrandizement of the militarized power elite.

If Mills became strident in pronouncement and tone, it was because only a few European-trained or -located intellectuals shared the assumptions of his dialogue on the international crisis as the final expression of the collapse of liberalism. It was in the late fifties that Mills, while continuing to teach at Columbia, left the university and sociology as a public to engage and create independent publics with other intellectuals in Europe and Latin America, and with intelligentsia (scientists, ministers, and students) in his own country. There is nothing substantially new in this endeavor as Mills tried to find new means to debate and resolve classic issues. What was different with *Causes* and *Yankee* was less the substance or ends of these books, and more their unique form (especially *Yankee* which was written from the first-person Cuban) which Mills composed to facilitate a cultural interpretation of issues to an ethnocentric, North American audience.

Horowitz does not view *Causes* and *Yankee* as the logical and morally-consistent offshoot of the arguments of *The Sociological Imagination* and *Images of Man*, not as the mark of a mature "new sociology," nor as the work of "the singular intellectual hero of our times" (Horowitz writing in 1963). Mills is now the solipsistic utopian. For instance, in a 1960s letter to Mills, Carlos Fuentes wrote that "We all admire and love you, not only as the United States' foremost intellectual voice, but above all, as a man and a friend . . . . Won't they hear and understand the truth when it is as courageously and honestly spoken as you have done?"[39] This accolade comes close to some of Horowitz's own written in the early sixties, but now Mills is a person who lacks the "good judgment to resist the sort of blandishments" that he received from "admirers such as Carlos Fuentes" (283). Having lost his "good judgment," causes "become intense personal espousals." "Events were no longer treated as objective events . . . . Every description was tinged with personal beliefs and disbeliefs. Personal animosities were translated into public tragedies" (283). Mills was the "lonely warrior" who became an "engaging captive" of mass culture where "celebrity status . . . became a quest, rather than a conse-

39. Cited by Horowitz, *C. Wright Mills*, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

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quence of work done" (283). With the loss of Mills' commitment to professional sociology, "Personal and objective factors became desperately, even dangerously, intertwined. He began identifying himself with world history and not just social reform. Politics became highly personalized" (283).

There is of course truth to the contention that for Mills the "personal was political," and that he espoused consistency between a theory of society and his role as an intellectual (i.e., moral pragmatism). This is but the manifestation of the classic liberal ethic unifying ends and means, self and object, freedom and reason. In other words, what Horowitz now rejects is Mills' fusion of the ethic of Protestant individualism with the role of the intellectual which, from the point of view of a post-new sociology as professional detachment, appears as solipsistic utopianism. It was of course this very attempt to link self and other through knowledge and political activism, as human action in defiance of alienation, that resonates so much in the politics of the sixties and even in Horowitz's younger conception of an ethicized new sociology. Now Horowitz indicts Mills as he did the student movement in the late sixties that their subjectified politics was a "revolt against reason." His commentary on Mills is patently embarrassing for he indicts Mills with the malady of modernism that Mills was in rebellion against: solipsistic conformism. Without any evidence or valid counter-interpretation, Horowitz claims that "*Causes* was a work largely passed over in silence by the right people. Nonetheless, it served to shed light on the transition of Mills from sociologist to moralist — the penultimate step on his road to self-immolation" (292). Defending professional discourse from the pathology of the "culture of critical discourse," a la Daniel Bell, Horowitz becomes lost in nonsensical rhetoric. As Tilman demonstrated, Mills was always a "moralist" in the sense that his work and responsibility was that of articulating normative traditions to public audience.

*Listen, Yankee!* was a novel attempt to interpret the political meaning of underdevelopment and revolutionary struggle through the impersonal voice of Cuba itself. Horowitz is correct in stating that Mills "had a love affair with the Cuban Revolution" (293). The Cuban revolution was important to Mills because it represented the history-making potential of pragmatic willfulness, opened up a new model of economic development, and discredited the official liberalism of the American establishment. If Mills over-romanticized the revolution, it nonetheless was the culmination of his long-standing belief, shared by liberals and Marxists alike, that men can make their own history under the worst conditions.

But to Horowitz, Mills had become an unabashed "partisan." "The book was his poorest effort in social analysis, a tract placed at the disposal of political forces he knew little of but cared much for. It contained banalities and hectorings which he personally loathed in others" (300). In the vaguest of assertions, the book was not the triumph of the classic tradition, but the expression of his "prejudices," the result of earlier "frustrations," reflecting his "desperate search for workable ideals" at a time when "his sense of self-esteem was lowest" (300-1). This rhetorical nonsense only buries what was an

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important contribution of *Yankee*: that Cuba might prefigure a third way out of the malaise of the cold war and underdevelopment, and vindicate the classic ideals of pragmatism in contrast to the failure of official "liberalism" to appreciate the new dimensions of the revolution. Moreover, the American refusal to listen to the new voice of the "wretched of the earth" which led to the Bay of Pigs invasion, the blockage and the nuclear missile crisis (thus validating the concerns of Mills' *The Causes of World War Three*), all contributed to the sovietization of Cuba as much as any internal tendency within the movement.

The evolving unity of Mills' work is given its final fracturing blow in the last chapter on final or "unfinished" projects which were more "social scientific" than "political" thus redeeming Mills in Horowitz's judgment. These are the writings and outlines on the "fourth epoch," the "Russian Journal," the "cultural apparatus and the new left," and a "comparative sociology of modern societies and states." Typically Millsian, the projects focused on the cultural and ideological meaning of the eclipse of the liberal, modern epoch; the central importance of knowledge and intelligentsia in the reproduction of post-modern societies; and the internationalization of stratification in the form of three worlds of development. Horowitz discusses the projects apart from their organic relation to works discussed in earlier chapters: the clarification of the role of the intellectual and modern ideology (liberalism and Marxism) in *The Sociological Imagination*, *Images of Man*, *The Marxists*; the politically-oriented *Causes* and *Yankee*. By so doing, Horowitz can state that the final projects maintained "the authenticity of social science as a standpoint outside of politics" (317) which for Mills was an impossibility. Accordingly, Mills saved himself from the "self-immolation" of the "prophet and fanatic" by "The intellectual continuities of his social scientific work [which] helped give meaning to those final dark and despairing years" (306). With absurd rhetoric Horowitz argues that Mills was only able to redeem himself in "those final dark and despairing years" by a recommitment to the "science of society."

Horowitz's unreflexive faith in classic scholasticism, social science, and the achievements of modernity blind him to the central thesis in Mills' work in his final years (which were not necessarily "dark and despairing" but also full of hope and energy: cf. the BBC lectures which Horowitz does not analyze). This is the idea of the "fourth epoch" by which Mills meant that the earlier liberal epoch of competitive capitalism with its ideals of individualism and democracy on the one hand, and class conflict and socialist reconciliation on the other, had definitely come to an end. All culture and ideology from that epoch which did not separate liberal and socialist normative ideals from actual insitutions were doomed to blind conservatism. In his study of the "cultural apparatus" and the "new left" Mills saw as his task the rescuing of classic ideals from technical incorporation and their revitalization within new publics and social movements (the new left). Thus Mills spent much time in his last two years talking with intellectuals in the Soviet Bloc countries, Europe, and Latin America; and in his famous "Letter to the New Left" addressed to

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British intellectuals he mentioned the prospects that students and the intelligentsia might be a new political force for shaping the meaning of the fourth epoch.[40] Mills hoped that they might provide answers to the central paradox of modernity: that increased rationality may not be assumed to make for increased freedom.

Mills' tentative and formal theory of the crisis of Western society did not separate science from politics, fact from value, structure from ideology, or the personal from the political. For Mills, the crisis of liberal society revealed in the phenomena of the cheerful robot, professionalized sociology, the cold war, and third world underdevelopment, was also a crisis of political philosophy and politics, specifically the collapse of liberalism and socialism as orienting ideologies. It was the responsibility of the intelligentsia through their work in the cultural apparatus to criticize, debate, and revitalize political philosophy. Thus, *Causes*, *Yankee*, *The Marxists*, and *The Sociological Imagination* were Mills efforts to substantively embody his own theory of the importance of cultural and ideological change.

Having long lost touch with the meaning of Mills' work and its relation to social change, Horowitz serves up an ambivalent chatter of platitudes and banalities as his final judgment on Mills. On the one hand, "Mills is ultimately best characterized in terms of seriousness: the achievement of enlightenment through the classic tradition in social science . . . . If discourse and debate often turned personal, even bitter, . . . it was that driven by a willful sense of purpose, of seriousness, Mills became a prophet and a fanatic" (330)[41] "Seriousness" is not a substantive idea, begging the question of intellectual interpretation. Mills' "seriousness" entailed a commitment to rational discourse and to pragmatic willfulness, which in Horowitz's mature professional judgment are antinomies which are falsely resolved as prophecy and fanaticism. It is implied that Mills would have been better off had he "functionally differentiated" the two realms of existence and not confused reason and irrationality. But, on the other hand, "Mills remains an engrossing figure for the social sciences and for American letters less because of any uniquely inspiring concept of well-turned pithy phrase than because of his persistent

40. Reprinted as "The New Left," *Power, Politics, and People*, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-259. Cf. also "The Decline of the Left," *Ibid.*, pp. 221-235; and "Culture and Politics," *Ibid.*, pp. 236-246.

41. Also note the following: Horowitz interprets the modern paradox between rationality and freedom in the cold-war terms that "The price of rationality is nothing short of a suspension of freedom (bureaucratized socialism and capitalism), while the price of freedom is nothing short of rationality (the balanced, developing society)" (323). On Mills' "epochal sociology" he writes that "one might argue with some credibility that the magnitude of this self-imposed task, coupled with its unrealizability, finally served to do him in; it was the final, self-created cul de sac" (326). One wonders what "served to do him in means? Contradicting himself, Horowitz then throws out the praise that "Mills reaches both sociological and literary heights, which inspire conjecture as to just what he would have produced in his magnum opus." (327) And then there are those numerous banal aftersights passed of as philosophical illumination: Mills "finally perceived the great truths of Ibn Khaldun, Vico, and Rousseau: development involved real social costs" (328), that "The final and unfinished writings of Mills must be seen as a part of the ongoing scientific struggle between clarification and manipulation, or if one prefers, the Faustian struggle between moral tribulation and immoral treason," (328) and "In this final and personally agonizing years, Mills addressed himself to the open secrets of society." (382)

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belief that the qualities of intensity, purpose, and judgment must be brought front and center into the discourse of social research" (33). What this banal language means is that Mills' importance for the revitalization of sociology was never substantive, having left no "uniquely inspiring concepts," but personal in Mills the purposive, secularly-moral individual. Mills has always been instrumental to Horowitz for symbolizing the constant necessity of purposive individuals bringing life to a moribund professionalized sociology. Yet Horowitz forgets that human intentionality comes from an engagement in normative traditions and moral responsibility which politicizes the relationship between the personal and the public. Without a foundation in practical reason, secular rationality collapses into empiricism, formalism, and subjectivism. It is these latter characteristics, typically those of sociology and Horowitz's biography, and as the reified otherness of human alienation, that need not subjective rejuvenation but practical transformation. Moreover, how absurd to claim that Mills left no enduring concepts and that Mills' contribution lay in that very personal commitment that Horowitz had denounced him for throughout the biography as solipsistic utopianism.

Horowitz ultimately trips over his own formal and subjective rhetoric, validating Mills' own indictment that rationality is not reason. The enduring meaning of Mills is that, under the worst historical circumstances where society and knowledge had collapsed reason into rationality, thus repressing freedom, he held on to the important distinctions between the two. *If* Mills' final years were "dark and despairing," this was because of the rationalization of reason imposed by society and to which he resisted and sought alternatives.

V

Neither the Tilman nor Horowitz biographies attracted much attention in either the radical or sociological press, more evidence that American culture and politics, like automobiles, are doomed to perpetual obsolesence and amnesia. The best that New York City could do within a year of Horowitz's biography was a short review by Steven Lukes (from England) in the *New York Times Book Review* under the title of "Scholar and Pamphleteer."[42] While this review offers nothing of intellectual substance, it is significant in two senses. First, the eminent sociologist from the University of Oxford, accepting the split between facts and values, knowledge and politics, scholarship and pamphleteering, upholds Horowitz for analyzing Mills "in less embattled terms" and for separating "rhetoric from analysis and the image from the man" (11). Praising Horowitz's scholarship, Lukes concludes that "C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian" is a vivid and tragic picture of lasting but flawed achievement, aborted promise and eventual betrayal of the intellectual's vocation. At his best, Mills could harness his moral and political commitments to powerfully explanatory intellectual analysis. At his worst, the former engulfed the man." Regurgitating Horowitz's banal judgments — "tragic," "flawed," "aborted promise," "betrayal" — trapped in the alienated rhetoric

42. November 13, 1983.

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of social scientific rationality, Lukes further testifies to the very impoverishment of sociology that Mills sought to overcome.

Second, Lukes' review was the occasion for a remarkable exchange of letters to the editor of *The New York Times Book Review*, the first from Mills' daughter Kathryn, speaking for Mills' entire family, and the second by Horowitz responding to the Mills family letter. Kathryn Mills, her letter entitled "Mills Misrepresented?",[43] took Horowitz to task for inaccuracies of fact and interpretation, for presenting "a distorted view of the man who is his subject," and finding "more than 50 errors of biographical fact, in addition to misinterpretations and questionable judgments that we will not venture to discuss here." What clearly bothered the Mills' family was Horowitz's portraits of Mills as a deviant, a womanizer, abrasive and unloving, self-embittered and frustrated, ostracized and despairing. Kathryn Mills wrote that "In fact, a period of self-doubt and the beginnings of a reassessment of Mills' views on Cuba, as documented by his close friend, the late Harvey Swados (*Dissent*, Winter, 1963) took place during Mills' last months, not his last two years. Mills had periods of lower energy; his last years included both good times and bad." Challenging Horowitz's pretentiousness for claiming to have broken new grounds in social science biography is the family's claim that Horowitz did not contact any of the family members or Mills' close friends in connection with this book." Mills' family were clearly outraged, not simply by particular factual distortions, but by Horowitz's gross misrepresentation of Mills' character and actions, of using a biography of Mills to legitimate his conception of academic sociology rather than understand the man and his works.

In his letter to the family Horowitz was structurally unable to understand why the family reacted as negatively as it had done, defensively arguing that "Indeed, I find it beyond comprehension that the family would take no comfort in this clearly empathic effort to understand a social scientist so important in the 20th century.[44] Claiming that the family disliked the biography for its factual debunking of the Millsian myths, Horowitz, in the name of Mills' own methodology, asserted that to conform the family with myths of their husband and father would be a "disservice to a complex, brilliant, troubled scholar" who deserves more than family outrage served up as intellectual pablum." Missing the charge that he had misjudged Mills in a cultural sense, Horowitz provided four major counter-facts to uphold his own credibility. Since he obviously felt that he had answered their charges on an empirical level, Horowitz could thus conclude, self-righteously and arrogantly, that the family's letter "seems to be an effort to delegitimate a work more widely heralded than any other written about a sociologist." Never understanding Mills' existential, moral, and cultural character (or his theory of the same), always viewing him from the professional lenses of social science and in-

43. "Mills Misrepresented," April 15, 1984. The acknowledged family members are listed as "Yaroslava Surmach Mills (C. Wright Mills' widow), Freya James (his first wife) and Pamela, Kathryn, Nikolas (his children)."

44. "On C. Wright Mills," *New York Times book Review*, May 20, 1984.

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stitutionalized rationality, it is no surprise that Horowitz would so candidly reject the judgment of Mills' family as so much "intellectual pablum."[45]

45. Horowitz's standard of truth is that of the old-man network, i.e., his university colleagues. Rhetorically, how could the family be right when someone of Daniel Bell's stature could write the following advertising blurb on the dust-jacket: "Irving Louis Horowitz has achieved what I thought would be almost impossible: to write a fair and just assessment, a comprehensive scrutiny of his work and a compelling portrait of the man."


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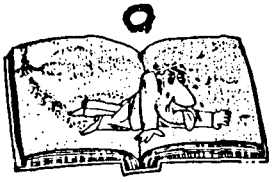

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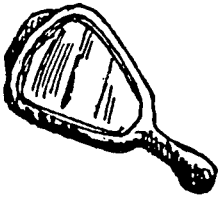

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# THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN EASTERN EUROPE

by Steven Sampson

No society works exactly like its constitution, and no organization functions exactly according to its official administrative guidelines. In the life of all societies and all bureaucratic organizations — East and West — there exist a whole variety of "informal structures" by which people accomplish their delegated tasks or through which they achieve their own personal goals. In the West, we speak of such informal structures in terms of "networks" or "connections." Those who "know somebody" can go around the bureaucratic queue or obtain free goods and services which others have to pay for. When the use of such connections becomes too blatant, we call it "nepotism" or "corruption." When they take on an openly acknowledged market value we call it "bribery." For most of us, corruption and bribery constitute the legal and moral limits of informal organization.

These limits seem more flexible when we examine informal organization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, however. These societies (it would only create confusion to call them "socialist" or "real socialist") are dominated by the presence of large scale bureaucracies in every sector of economic, political and social life. One would think that their bureaucratized character would tend to restrict or progressively inhibit informal organization. Nevertheless, evidence of daily life in Eastern Europe — evidence furnished by Western researchers and journalists, by East European emigre writers, and by the official press itself — all point to quite the opposite: an informal sector which not only exists but actually thrives within the interstices of bureaucratic organization. In the sphere of interpersonal relations, informal structures manifest themselves via the numerous "favors," neighborly exchanges of goods and services, and by the constant use of friends and connections to obtain scarce resources.[1] Within each of the bureaucratic institutions of Eastern Europe, informal structures make themselves felt. In the planning system it takes the form of underfulfillment, unexpected overfulfillment, "distortions" of the plan and the constant improvisation by which the planning system operates.[2] In the

1. Cf. J. Szczepanski, *Polish Society* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 173-193 on "Microstructures" of Polish society; V. Schlapentokh, *Love, Marriage and Friendship in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1985), pp. 180-203.

2. R. Bauer, A. Inkeles and C. Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works: Cultural, Psychological and Social Themes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956). Cf. also M. Hirszowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathian: A Study in the Sociology of Communism* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), pp. 127-170; W. Brus and H. Ticktin, "Is Market Socialism Possible or Necessary?", in *Critique*, no. 14, 1981,



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bureaucracy it appears in the form of "formalism," "poor organization" (as used in the media), as apathy, nepotism, outright corruption and chaos.[3] In the economic institutions the informal sector is expressed as the underground, quasi-criminal or other "second economy" activities.[4] In the sphere of information distribution, informal structures operate in the unofficial sector of *samizdat*, *tamizdat*, rumor, and gossip.[5] Within the sphere of folk categories, official designations as "peasant," "worker" or "functionary" pale in importance with the unofficial social categorizations known simply as "us" and "them."[6] And finally, in the sphere of social values, the official ethos of equality of opportunity and enlightened "socialist man" competes with a "second consciousness" stressing friends, connections, conspicuous consumption, status hierarchies and utter contempt for any activities in the public sphere.[7]

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p. 13-41; S. Sampson, *National Integration through Socialist Planning: An Anthropological Study of a Romanian New Town* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984).

3. Cf. M. Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958); R. Manning, *Government in the Soviet Countryside in the Stalinist Thirties: The Case of Belyi Raion in 1937* (Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, University of Pittsburg, Russian and East European Studies Program, 1984 [paper no. 301]); J. Tarkowski, "Poland: Patrons and Clients in a Planned Economy," in *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development*, ed. by S.N. Eisenstadt and R. Lemarchand (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing Co., 1981) and "Patronage in a Centralized System: the Case of Poland," in *International Political Science Review*, vol. 4, (1983), p. 495ff; S. Sampson, "Bureaucracy and Corruption as Anthropological Problems: A Case Study from Romania," *Folk* (Copenhagen), vol. 25 (1983), pp. 63-97; G. Schöpflin, "Informalism, Corruption and Irregularity in Eastern Europe," Paper presented at 1984 Meetings of British National Assoication for Soviet and East European Studies, Cambridge; N. Lampert, *Whistleblowing in the Soviet Union: Complaints and Abuses under State Socialism* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

4. Cf. G. Grossman, "The Second Economy of the USSR" in *Problems of Communism* vol. 26, no. 5 (1977), pp. 25-40; A. Katselinboigen, "Colored Markets in the Soviet Union," in *Soviet Studies*, vol. 29 (1977), p. 62ff. J. Kenedi, *Do It Yourself: Hungary's Hidden Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 1982); G. Mars and Y. Altman, "The Cultural Basis of Georgia's Second Economy," in *Soviet Studies* vol. 35 (1983), pp. 546-560. S. Sampson, "Rich Families and Poor Collectives: An Anthropological Approach to Romania's Second Economy," in *Bidrag til Öststatsforskning* (Uppsala), vol. 11, no. 1 (1983), pp. 44-77. The Literature on "the second economy" — both East and West — is enormous. For a recent overview see W. Gaertner and A. Wenig, eds., *The Economics of the Shadow Economy* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1985).

5. R. Bauer and D. Gleicher, "Word-of-mouth Communication in the Soviet Union," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 17 (1953), pp. 297ff., A. Inkeles and R. Bauer, *The Soviet Citizen* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959); K. Heltberg *et al*, *Kultur og Censur i de Slaviske Lande* (Copenhagen: Centrum, 1983); J. Curry, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984); S. Sampson, "Rumors in Socialist Romania," in *Survey*, vol. 28 (Winter 1984), pp. 142-164; Y. Glasov, *The Russian Mind Since Stalin's Death* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Riedel and Co., 1985).

6. For example, in Poland, "everything that exists in the gap between family and nation, the whole range of institutions operating there . . . elicits no sense of identification. It is the world of 'them'." Cf. M. Vale ed., *Poland: The State of the Republic — Two Reports by the Experience and Future Discussion Group (DiP)*, (London: Pluto Press, 1981), p. 15. Whether "them" constitute a new class, or strata, or party elite, or privileged group is subsidiary to the fact that a category of "them" clearly exists. Debate is about who belongs to "them" and how one keeps from falling back into the category of "us." Cf. M. Mathews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978); A. Zinoviev, *The Reality of Communism* (London: Victor Gollans, Ltd., 1984); M. Voslensky, *Nomenclatura* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984); D. Willis, *Klass: How Russians Really Live* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985).

7. Cf. Vale, *Poland: The State of the Republic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-75; the articles in *Sisyphus Sociological Studies*, Vol. 3, *Crisis and Conflict: Poland 1980-1981* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1982) M. Simecka,

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How do we account for the presence of so much non-bureaucratic behavior in societies which appear to be so bureaucratized? One explanation could be that informal structures "fill gaps" in the inefficient running of the bureaucracy. In this sense, informal structures are seen as "secondary," as minor dysfunctions of the system which help it to "muddle through."[8] Another explanation would be to see informal organization — especially ties of kinship, nepotism and suspicion of the state — as an inheritance from the peasant past, destined to be eliminated. This is the official view. Both explanations are obviously true. Yet, they simply beg the question of why, after 40 years of "perfecting" (not to mention the USSR's 63 years), the East European bureaucracies cannot fulfill their ostensible tasks; i.e., why such "survivals" seem not only to persist, but are by most accounts consolidating themselves. It seems that in Eastern Europe, informal organization has itself become institutionalized. Along with the official polity there is what Gitelman calls a "second polity."[9] Instead of creeping bureaucratization ("increasing role of the party") there is a creeping "Georgianization" of Soviet-type societies in which friends, networks, patrons and payments are facts of life for both the ordinary citizen and the elites.[10] Here lies the paradox of these seemingly bureaucratized societies: What appears to be "secondary" for some observers seems "backward" for others and for still others "the very essence" of these systems.[11] The object of this paper is to offer a more systematic analysis of Eastern Europe's informal sector. It first discusses the components of informal social networks and then goes on to decribe three types of linkages between informal structures and formal institutions. The final section of the paper compares informal structures across Eastern Europe; it is via such comparisons that we can decipher the potential for stability, crisis or social transformation in these societies.

The data for this paper stems originally from my own anthropological fieldwork on the informal sector in Romania.[12] However, it also incorporates

*The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia* (London: Verso, 1984); J. Cole, "Problems of Socialism in Eastern Europe," in *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol. 9 (1985), pp. 247-248; A. Zinoviev, *The Second Society: The Reduplication of the Social Paradigm in Contemporary Society: The Case of Hungary* (Budapest: Institute of Sociology Working Papers, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1985), an English summary of a longer work in Hungarian; V. Schlapentokh, *Love, Marriage and Friendship in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.*

8. C. Schwartz, "Corruption and Political Development in the USSR," in *Comparative Politics*, vol. 11, 1979, p. 425ff. Grossman, "The Second Economy of the USSR," *op. cit.*; G. Schöpflin, "Informalism, Corruption and Irregularity in Eastern Europe," *op. cit.* Hungarian research into the second (or secondary) economy also falls into this category. See I. Gabor, "The Second (Secondary) Economy," in *Acta Oeconomica*, vol. 22 (1979), p. 291ff. Second economy research in Hungary has achieved such a degree of legitimation that a recent book on the subject (I. Gabor and P. Galassi's *A. Masodik Gazdasag*, 1981) actually received an official prize.

9. Z. Gitelman, "Working the Soviet System: Citizens and Urban Bureaucracies," in *The Contemporary Soviet City* ed. by H. Morton and R. Stuart (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1985).

10. The term "Georgianization" is used by Schlapentokh, *Love, Marriage and Friendship in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.* p. 229.

11. "The essence of the system" view is most explicitly stated in K. Simis, *USSR: The Corrupt Society* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

12. S. Sampson, *National Integration through Socialist Planning*, *op. cit.*; "Rich Families and Poor Collectives," *op. cit.*; "Bureaucracy and Corruption as Anthropological Problems," *op. cit.*;

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the research and data furnished by other social scientists, journalists and emigres, such that the informal sector can be understood from a more comparative perspective.[13]

"Rumors in Socialist Romania," *op. cit.* This paper represents a summary and extension of these and the following articles: "Urbanization: Planned and Unplanned — a Case Study of Brasov City, Romania," in *The Socialist City* ed. by R. French and F.E.I. Hamilton (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1979) p. 507ff.; "Is Romania the Next Poland?" *Critique*, no. 16 (1983), 139ff; "Elites and Mobilization in Romanian Villages," *Sociologia Ruralis*, vol. 24 (1984), p. 29ff.; "Muddling Through in Romania: Why the Mamaliga Doesn't Explode," *Int. Journal of Rumanian Studies* 5/6 (1984); and with O. Norgaard, "Poland's Crisis and East European Socialism," *Theory and Society*, vol. 13, (1984), p. 773ff.

13. Research conducted in Eastern Europe by Western anthropologists is particularly valuable for its focus on informal structures of kinship and friendship networks, patron-client relations, village-urban linkages and ethnicity. This literature is reviewed in J. Halpern and D. Kideckel, "Anthropology of Eastern Europe," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 12 (1983), p. 277ff. Other recent contributions dealing with informal relations include P.D. Bell, *Peasants in Socialist Transition: Life in a Collectivized Hungarian Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); C.M. Hann, *A Village without Solidarity: Polish Peasants in Years of Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); C. Humphrey, *Karl-Marx Collective*, a study of a Buryat collective farm in the USSR; and the ongoing studies published in the journal *Dialectical Anthropology*.

Anthropologists such as Clyde Kluckhohn, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict and Geoffrey Gorer were instrumental in the beginning of Soviet Studies in the United States. Kluckhohn, a Navaho expert, headed the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, and coauthored *How the Soviet System Works*. Benedict was co-director of Columbia University's Research on Contemporary Cultures Project, from which emerged Mead's *Soviet Attitudes toward Authority*, Benedict's "Child Rearing in Eastern Europe," and Gorer and Rickman's *The People of Great Russia*, source of the infamous "Swaddling Hypothesis." Journalistic sources are particularly important for the Soviet Union, where long-term participant-observation is largely impossible for anthropologists. Hedrick Smith's *The Russians* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1976, revised 1984) occupies a singular place in Soviet Studies as a source on daily life in the USSR. See also R. Kaiser, *Russia: The People and the Power* (New York: Atheneum, 1976); D. Shipler, *Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams* (New York: Times Books, 1983); and D. Willis, *Klass*, *op. cit.* East European dissidents, emigres and exiles have also produced excellent "native ethnographies" of their own systems, focusing naturally on the gap between the official ideology and everyday reality. While less ambitious than the work of Bahro, Konrad and Szelenyi, Feher, Heller and Markus, "Casals" (pseud.) or Djilas, the data from these native ethnographies is quite useful. Previously cited are the works of Voslensky, Glasov, Kenedi, Simis, Simecka, Zinoviev, Schlapentokh, Hirszowicz, and the Polish *DiP* Report ed. by Vale. One can add here D. Bonavia, *Fat Sasha and the Urban Guerilla: Protest and Conformism in the Soviet Union* (London: Hamish and Hamilton, 1973); Y. Brokhin, *Hustling on Gorky Street* (London: W.H. Allen, 1976); M. Haraszti, *A Worker in a Workers' State* (New York: Universe Books, 1978); V. Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1983); L. Timofeev, *Soviet Peasants: The Peasants' Art of Starving* (New York: Telos Press, 1985).

The Soviet and East European official press contains numerous case material on informal structures, mostly under the guise of exposes of corruption or nepotism. These are frequently analyzed in the Research Reports of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, while N. Lampert's *Whistleblowing in the Soviet Union* (*op. cit.*) has attempted a more systematic study using the press and emigre informants.

One final source for the study of the informal sector, unused in this paper, remain fictional works: Konrad's *Case Worker* and *City Builder*, Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward* and *First Circle*, and Zinoviev's *Yawning Heights*, *Radiant Future* and *Homo Sovieticus*, Belov's *The New Life*, the Soviet "village literature" group headed by Rasputin, etc. Soviet trivial literature from the post-war period is explicitly analyzed from the viewpoint of human relations in V. Dunham's *In Stalin's Time: Middle-Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); while R. Hingley's *The Russian Mind* (London: The Bodley Head, 1977) uses literature as a means of understanding the Russian and Soviet personality. I wish to emphasize again that this list of sources is in no way meant to be exhaustive but instead provides clues as to what kind of sources could be employed to elucidate the informal sector.

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*Components of the Informal Sector*

"Informal" does not mean "disorganized," casual or chaotic. Informal structures are very intricately organized. They are simply organized differently than corporate bureaucratic organizations; often they are hidden within them.[14]

One type of informal organization is centered on ties of *family and kin group.* This may be as harmless as family members helping out in the store or farm on weekends, or it can be the allocation of jobs to family members (nepotism). Close relations can help us find that apartment or lend us money *without* interest. Old parents in the village can send food and meat products to their children in the city. This is, after all, what family is supposed to be all about.

A second form of informal organization is based on *common ethnic or territorial origin*, or similar shared experiences (war veterans, club members, schoolboy networks). Shared language, culture or historical experiences can provide a protective barrier against alien authorities and help maintain effective social networks. This is especially advantageous for various illegal activities, no matter whether it is the ethnically based organized crime in the West or the underground economic activities carried out in Soviet Georgia or Armenia.[15]

Where family, ethnic and territorial ties do not suffice, *ties of friendship* can be utilized. Such ties may exist between members of an office clique who "cover" for each other when they pilfer merchandise or leave early. Similarly, two friends working in separate institutions may also be able to exchange resources or use each other's connections. Where the resources are roughly equal in value, the friendship ties also tend to be equal, i.e., "horizontal."[16]

Personal networks may also take on an unequal, "vertical" relation in which *patrons, brokers and clients* interact. In social anthropology, a "patron" is some-

14. In a parallel discussion of nonbureaucratic forms of social organization, John Cole prefers the term "noncorporate" over "informal." See J. Cole, "Family, Farm and Factory: Rural Workers in Contemporary Romania," in *Romania in the 1980s* ed. D. Nelson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 83-86; "In a Pig's Eye: Daily Life and Political Economy in Southeastern Europe," in *Economy, Society and Culture in Contemporary Romania* ed. by J. Cole, (Amherst: Dept. of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Research Report Number 24, 1984), pp. 165-168; and "Problems of Socialism in Eastern Europe," *op. cit.* Brenda Danet analyzes these relations in terms of "particularism" versus "universalism." See her *Abdication from Justice: The Use of Personal Influence in Bureaucratic Encounters* (forthcoming) and "Giving the Underdog a Break: Latent Particularism among Custom Officials," in *Bureaucracy and the Public* ed. by E. Katz and B. Danet (New York: Basic Books, 1975) pp. 329-337. Finally, G. Schöpflin (*op. cit.*) uses the term "informalism" but never actually defines it. Note that my use of the term "informal sector" is much broader than that used to describe the peripheral economies of the urban poor or of Third World slums. Cf. A. Portes, "The Informal Sector: Definition, Controversey and Relation to National Development," in *Review*, vol. 7 (Summer 1983) p. 151ff; and Keith Hart (Cambridge University) "The Informal Economy," Ms. 1985.

15. Cf. Mars and Altman and K. Simis, *USSR: The Corrupt Society*, *op. cit.* Most of the examples in Simis' book take place in outlying rural areas, in peripheral republics (Georgia, Armenia) or among ethnic pariah groups (Jews, Gypsies).

16. For some anthropological approaches to friendship see J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974); E. Leyton, (ed.) *The Compact: Selected Dimensions of Friendship* (St. Johns: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1974); and E. Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Society," in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies* ed. by M. Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966), p. 1ff.

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one having direct access to or ownership of scarce resources.[17] This may be a powerful landlord in a feudal system or a party secretary in a socialist system. His "clients" seek to gain access to these resources by offering the patron gifts, services or loyalty. It is characteristic of patron-client relations that they are individual centered, that the resources exchanged are of unequal values (e.g., bureaucratic access in return for accorded prestige), and that they rely on moral rather than simple utilitarian exchange. In many East European villages, peasants send their first batch of strawberries to the local schoolteacher, or ask the doctor to be godmother to their child in the hope they or their children will receive special attention.[18] Between the patrons and clients are people who may not own the scarce resources, but who can obtain access to them via their own networks. These are the "brokers."[19] The village party secretary is a patron to other villagers. However, when villagers have a problem with the regional bureaucracy, he functions as a broker. Typically he may have a friend in the county capital who can help them, etc. Depending on the situation, most East Europeans variously function as brokers, clients and patrons in different contexts.

Informal structures, be they horizontal or vertical, serve as alternative means of allocating resources. They thus compete with traditional bureaucratic means of re-distribution. Hence, under normal conditions, the organization's manager has the right to the chauffered car, his assistant to representation money, and the office chief unrestricted phone calls. In the informal hierarchy, however, these resources may be reallocated along lines of kinship, friendship, ethnicity or patronage: the manager's son-in-law uses the car, his friend gets the company credit card for a free lunch, his fellow hometown chum gets a cutrate deal on spare parts, etc.

*The Signficance of Informal Organization*

Now most of what has been described above can be found in any society — in the West, the Third World and in Eastern Europe. It is a truism to say that there is no bureaucracy without corruption, and no corruption without bureaucracy. But is there a genuine difference between the way informal organization functions in the West and in socialist Eastern Europe? The answer is yes. In the West, informal networks function largely as a supplement to the formal system of market relations and welfare bureaucracy (at least for the middle and working classes). They are *important*, to be sure, but not vital. All of us need these networks *some* of the time (and a few of us need them all the

17. Boissevain and Wolf, *ibid.*, both include patronage in their discussion of friendship networks. Wolf calls patronage "lopsided-friendship." (p. 14) Similarly, in their comprehensive survey of the patron-client literature, S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger also discuss the role of "trust" and friendship; see their *Patrons, Clients and Friends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

18. Some East European case studies of patronage are found in the work of Bell, Hann, Sampson 1983, 1984, and Cole 1984 (all *op. cit.*), and in the work of J. Tarkowski (see footnote 3).

19. On "brokerage" see R. Paine, "A Theory of Patronage and Brokerage," in *Patronage and Brokers in the East Artic* ed. by R. Paine (St. Johns: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1971); and J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, *op. cit.* pp. 147-169.

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time). In Eastern Europe, highly valued or needed resources are constantly in scarce supply, due either to economic mismanagement or political expediency. This makes informal channels and social networks absolutely *vital* for the day to day existence of virtually all East Europeans. Compared to his Western counterpart, who needs these networks *some* of the time, the East European might say that, "all of us need them all the time."

Acknowledging the importance of the informal sector still leaves us with the problem of evaluating its relation to the system as a whole. Observers have variously interpreted informal structures as survivals from the pre-socialist past, as a social "lubricant," as a "refuge" where authentic personal relations can exist, as a direct reaction to the bureaucratic oppression of East European societies, as a direct threat to the ruling political order, and as an incipient form of human liberation.[20]

There is no need to revert to nostalgia: informal relations can be just as conflictual and exploitative as the most repressive bureaucratic apparatus. This paper discusses what I regard as the three principal modes of interaction between the informal sector and the formal bureaucratic institutions: *benign*, *corrupting*, and *system-threatening*.

Informal structures function as *benign aids* to the system when they help the bureaucracy achieve its stated goals via unorthodox methods. In this sense, informal structures are "flexible," i.e., another means of achieving the same thing, or what Heidenheimer calls "white corruption."[21]

20. For example: "Informal communications play *the* most critical role in the daily operations of Soviet city administration . . . . Informal communities function as the "grease" that eliminates many of the frictions and irrationalities that persist in local administration . . . [I]nformal networks in [no] way threaten the broader forms of social control and political isolation that the Soviet system of government may still impose on individuals." (S. Sternheimer, "Communications and Power in Soviet Urban Politics," in *Soviet Local Politics and Government* ed. by E. Jacobs (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983) pp. 153-154, 149. Other "lubricant" theories are common in journalistic accounts, in analyses of the second economy, and in C. Schwartz' (*op. cit.*) discussion of "white" and "black" corruption in the USSR. The "corrosive" function of informal structures is highlighted by K. Simis (*op. cit.*) and K. Jowitt in his "Soviet Neo-traditionalism: Political Corruption in a Leninist Regime," in *Soviet Studies*, vol. 35, (1983), p. 275ff. The informal sector as "refuge" is reflected in Friedrich and Brzezinski's classic formulation of totalitarianism, in which the family is termed "an island of separateness from the regime." See Friedrich and Brzesinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (New York: Praeger, 1956, p. 290). Similarly, both Schlapentokh and Szczepanski, *op.cit.*, offer sentimental praise to the authenticity of friendship relations in Soviet and Polish societies respectively. Other accounts emphasize the "liberation" aspect of informal structures. Mars' and Altman's *Soviet Capitalists*, *op. cit.*, depicts second economy participants as entrepreneurs and risk takers, while the Hungarian Janos Kenedi, *op. cit.*, depicts his efforts to go around the bureaucracy as a kind of quiet revolution. The "liberating" aspect of informal structures has its echo in the Western literature as well. Cf. S. Henry, *Informal Institutions: Alternative Networks in the Corporate State* (New York, St. Martins Press, 1981), R. Pahl, "Employment Work and the Domestic Division of Labor," in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 4 (1980), p. 1ff and G. Mars, *Cheats at Work: An Anthropology of Workplace Crime* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1982). In Denmark, a popular graffiti slogan underlining the liberating role of informal structures is "Eat Green, Vote Red, Work Black." For an anthropological review of the informal/underground economy literature see my "Decadence of Utopia? The Anthropology of Denmark's Underground Economy." (Ms. published in Danish in *Stofskifte*, journal of the Danish Anthropology Association, no. 12, 1985, p. 83ff).

21. A. Heidenheimer (ed.), *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (New York: Rinehardt and Winston, 1970), p. 14.

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Informal structures, however, may also lead to the achievement of goals quite contrary to those officially mandated by the organization or society. Here it operates *corruptively*, typical examples of such corruption being the petty bribe or more spectacular cases of nepotism or embezzlement. The corrupting aspects of informal organization may also begin to generate their own alternative social hierarchies and value systems. That is, they may generate a "second polity," a "second society," "second culture" indeed a "second consciousness."[22] The organization may itself malfunction, but the system as a whole muddles through. There is perpetual crisis — crisis is the *normal* state of affairs, whether it is a factory trying to make its plan at the end of the month or a peasant trying to board a bus which is already full. Yet the crisis does not lead to any sort of social or institutional reform (instead of revising the plan the manager inflates the figures; instead of demanding extra buses the peasant bribes the driver to get on).

In certain cases — particularly when political legitimacy declines and access to material resources (food, fuel) becomes so inadequate that not even corruption will suffice — the informal organization takes on a *system-threatening character*. People formerly content to ignore or evade official goals and pursue their private interests now begin to articulate these interests in the public sphere. From being a nuisance, informal organization becomes a genuine destabilizing force in the system.

The "problem" of informal organization is precisely this triple potential: *that the same kinds of alternative channels or informal structures can serve benign, corrupting and system-threatening functions simultaneously.* And that in Eastern Europe there seems to be no way to break out of this circle. The state is constantly seeking to restore a balance, so that the benign functions will predominate, the corruptive elements are kept in check, and the system-threatening elements repressed.

*Getting Things Done (by any means necessary).*

Most East European organizations — from the planning bureaucracy to a small village collective farm — are subject to overambitious plans, overcentralized control, and inadequate resources. Monetary incentives are lacking or are deemed ideologically improper, while crude coercion is seen as impractical in building an advanced industrial society. The mobilizing ability of intermediate institutions is similarly inadequate: these institutions are discredited or illegitimate in comparison with the sphere of primary group loyalties such as family, neighborhood, church or ethnic group (hence the view of Poland as "a federation of families").[23] Moral incentives or appeals to commonly recognized goals such as "development," "achieving socialism," "self-reliance" or "overcoming a temporary crisis" have not proven effective

22. "Second polity" coined by Z. Gitelman, "second society," "second consciousness" used by Hankiss, and "second culture" (also called "unofficial culture") used by Glasov, all *op. cit.*

23. "[Poles] identify primarily with the smallest and the largest of the basic groups in society — the family and the nation . . . . [B]etween the primary groups (family, friends) and the nation as a social totality there exists a kind of sociological void." . . . "The nation is a federation of families." Cf. Vale ed., *Poland: The State of the Republic op. cit.*, pp. 61, 15.

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in the long run. Hence, other supplementary means have to be found to help fulfill the plan and achieve social objectives. A typical strategy for Soviet enterprises is to employ a "fixer" (*tolkach*) who functions as a broker between various organizations, using connections and bribes to obtain scarce supplies. Though formally illegal, such transactions are usually overlooked as long as the plan is fulfilled. In these "societies with a plan" (rather than "planned societies"), the end justifies the means, and the means used are often "informal."

Attaching a broker to a formal institution is just one strategy. Another is to create artificial families who out of moral commitment will accomplish tasks which bureaucratic directives or standard salaries could not. In the USSR and other East European countries, brigades of youth are sent to outlying zones in a kind of frontier atmosphere to build railroads or waterworks.

Still another strategy used by the state to achieve the goals of formal organization is to appeal to existing family loyalties and integrate them into the operation of the enterprise. In Romania, the collective farm system now operates by allocating a piece of land to individual farmers who must weed, harvest and deliver the final crop. Payment is made according to the amount delivered rather than the actual labor time. *How* the collective farmer works the land — or *who* actually labors on it — is no longer the concern of the collective farm organization. In fact, many collective farmers cultivate the land with the help of their families: the husband comes home from the factory and the children help out on weekends or during vacations. The collective farm gets the benefit of this family labor without having to pay for it.[24]

In similar fashion, many village mobilization campaigns are often linked to ties of kinship and neighborhood.[25] A local mayor will mobilize his kinsmen to help out during a voluntary work brigade. The kinsmen will come not because of the abstract appeal to "socialist voluntary work," but because they are "family" with the mayor. The creation of such sentimental ties is often a conscious intention of local and middle level bureaucrats in Romania. They often make villagers or clients feel that they are getting a special favor even when they are simply carrying out their normal duties. In this way, the villagers or clients are made to feel "in debt." When the mayor comes around to ask the villager to sign a contract to raise a pig for the state, or to work on a Sunday brigade, the villager feels obliged to go, but this is a *personal* obligation to the mayor rather than a social obligation as citizen of a socialist state. This

24. For further analysis of the Romanian contract-payment system and its effect on collective farm families see M. Cernea, *Changing Society and Family Change: The Impact of the Cooperative Farm on the Peasant Family*, (Stanford: Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, 1971); "The Large-Scale Formal Organization and the Family Primary Group," in *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (November 1975), p. 927ff.; and D. Kideckel, "The Dialectic of Rural Development: Cooperative Farm Goals and Family Strategies in a Romanian Commune," in *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, vol. 5 (1977), p. 43ff.; *Agricultural Cooperativism and Social Process in a Romanian Commune*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 1979.

25. Cf. D. Kideckel, *ibid.*; J. Cole, "In a Pig's Eye," *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166; P. Bell, *op. cit.*, 236-259; C. Hann, *op. cit.* ch. 5; S. Sampson, *National Integration through Socialist Planning*, *op. cit.* pp. 233-285 and "Elites and Mobilization in Romanian Villages," *op. cit.*

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blending of bureaucratic tasks and moral obligations must not be confused with corruption; rather, it is a "debureaucratization" of relations which helps achieve bureaucratic goals.[26] However, the particular structural conditions prevailing in Eastern Europe make it easy for debureaucratization to evolve into genuine corruption.

Informal structures are also present in the various systems of communication used among the populace. East Europeans are historically mistrustful of state institutions, and the face-to-face nature of informal personal relations has a much higher degree of legitimacy than a bureaucratic communique. Hence, the typical party activist carries out "oral agitation."[27] Bureaucrats and even ministers learn which directives can be thrown into the drawer and which are to be taken seriously; those taken most seriously are those communicated orally: orality is secretive, conspiratorial, but effective. "A letter along formal lines without a personal call to Sasha or Vanya or Misha generally accomplishes nothing except the need for yet another letter. But a phone call to one's friend or acquaintance remains inadequate without an eventual exchange of papers and documents so as to protect all parties in the future. This is an unwritten rule of the Soviet communications network."[28]

The East European regimes skillfully exploit informal communication channels for their own ends. In Czechoslovakia, for example, the security organs ("secret" police) never formally announce the interrogation of a suspect. As the Czechoslovak dissident Milan Simecka describes, "Interrogations are not dreamed up with an eye on the interrogated persons alone. They are conceived with the entire neighborhood in mind as well. It is enough for someone to be taken off to a hearing on a couple of occasions for the entire neighborhood to hear about it, as the word gets around. The fact automatically brands the person in question. The signal has been given that the police are interested in so and so."[29]

The "informational psychosis" described by Polish intellectuals in the *DiP Report* combines a universal conspiracy theory and a faith in informal channels.[30] Hence: "People who for decades have not been informed . . . about the critical issues facing our country . . . have a reflex reaction to every piece of news: 'They can't fool us!' . . . . If the real machinery of politics remains hidden, then people will look for a secret mechanism, somebody's invisible hand behind every event. Poles have ceased believing in coincidences." This leads

26. "Debureaucratization" is discussed by E. Katz and S.N. Eisenstadt, "Some Sociological Observations on the Response of Israeli Organizations to New Immigrants," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1960), and in Eisenstadt's, *Essays on Comparative Institutions* (New York: J. Wiley, 1965). The relation between debureaucratization and corruption in Eastern Europe is further explored in my "Bureaucracy and Corruption as Anthropological Problems," *op. cit.*

27. See especially A. Inkeles' discussion of "oral agitation" and agitators in his *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

28. Sternheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

29. M. Simecka, *The Restoration of Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

30. M. Vale ed., *Poland: The State of the Republic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26. For a discussion of Stalinism and "conspiracy theory as a universal world explanation" see F. Feher's reveiw of Topol and Nezhansky's *Red Square* in *Telos*, no. 61 (Fall 1984), pp. 172-174.

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to a "naive credulity in reverse. People who trust no one and believe nothing will tomorrow accept the most improbable rumors and trust the first clever demagogue who comes along."

The Polish "informational psychosis" is amplified in Romania. Here the legitimacy of informal channels is so great that not only is the official press not trusted, but whatever is *not* in the papers *must* be true. This makes plausible the most fantastic rumors: e.g., that President Ceaucescu's wife is really a double, or that Romanian King Michael landed in a remote area in his helicopter, or that a Bucharest restaurant is selling human meat, etc.[31]

In Romania, the use of rumor is particularly instrumental as a public relations tactic by newly assigned regional (county) party secretaries. Secretary-General and President Nicolae Ceaucescu has made himself (and his wife) the only real "personalities" in Romanian political life. The photograph, speeches or visits of a country party secretary, someone responsible for 600,000 people, are normally not publicized in the mass media or local newspaper. Limited in their ability to use formal channels of information and communication (aside from the bureaucratic "directive"), the county party secretaries thus campaign using informals channels, and especially, via rumor. In one district, a few weeks after a new party secretary had been named, rumors spread that he had dressed himself as a factory worker and wandered into a large plant. Here, it is said, he saw workers coming and going from their jobs, foremen playing cards and managers drinking in the office. The angered party secretary finally walks into the director's office and reveals himself, thus forcing the director to take disciplinary measures against subordinates.

In another story, the party secretary wanders into a clinic needing treatment, but is not aided until he bribes a nurse. He thereupon reveals himself and dismisses the staff. A similar rumor arises when he stands in line for meat. The butcher in the state-run shop insists that he has no meat left, but the party secretary forces him to reveal his stocks and finds plenty of meat; the butcher has saved it for his personal contacts. The party secretary forces the butcher to give the meat to the customers and to pay the costs himself.

Via informal channels, the party secretary creates a new image. He becomes a benevolent despot: the Good King going among his people disguised as a simple man, finding chaos, restoring justice, instilling fear into those who violate "norms of socialist legality."

The point here is not that party secretaries actually go out and do these things. Perhaps they do, but it certainly cannot be verified. The point is that everyone *believes they do precisely because they are spread as rumors*, i.e., by informal channels. Had the secretary conducted a newspaper or TV campaign against inefficient factories or corrupt services it would have been ignored as just another "campaign." Informal channels — with their aura of truth — served as a more effective means of getting the message across.

A final example of the benign functions of informal structures lies in the

31. For a more extended discussion of rumor transmission in Romania, see my "Rumors in Socialist Romania," *op. cit.*

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economic sector. Planners seem to have so much faith in the population's ability to provision themselves via informal channels that they can with impunity reduce the availability of food, consumer goods and services. For, despite shortages of even basic items, most Romanians believe that *nothing is ever totally unavailable* either. Those who have "friends" or cash, or who are "clever," will locate them. And sure enough most Romanians do manage to "find solutions." For example, the country's 1983 campaign to conserve fuel led to a reduction in the number of taxis by 50%. For a short period there was chaos. However, private car owners soon began hanging around train stations soliciting customers, and it became custom to flag down private car owners and pay them a fee equal to or greater than the taxi fee to the same destination. The results of this "campaign" and of the informal response to it made everyone happy. The planners were happy to show a reduction in fuel consumption in the public sector. Private car owners, suffering from high gasoline prices, were happy to make extra money, often twice the fare. Customers were satisfied that they could at least get a ride; a hundred taxi drivers had been laid off, but every private car now became a potential taxi. The regime's unbounded faith in the population's "cleverness" enables it to continually reduce consumption or manipulate with shortages.[32]

There are hidden costs with such policies, however. The population "finds a solution" but they must pay more for it. Confidence in state institutions declines, sometimes irrevocably. Informal networks are pushed harder and may themselves prove inadequate. And since certain individuals, occupational or ethnic groups are better able to use informal channels than others, new kinds of social tensions can result. Hence, societies like Romania which appear infinitely patient can be pushed so far before their frustrations break out into a Polish or Hungarian opposition. The task for each of the East European regimes is to hold informal channels to their benign functions. If not, informal organization will become "corruptive" or even "system-threatening."

*The Alternative System*

Informal structures operate corruptively (dysfunctionally) when they directly impede the operation of formal state bureaucracies or policies. Instead of channeling their energies in such a way that state goals are fulfilled (either directly or indirectly), people use their energies to maximize their own private or household strategies. In this process they not only compete with the state, but with the informal networks of others as well. Every organization becomes a bureaucratic resource bank, a common forest to be exploited by networks of kin, friends and patron-client groups. In this situation the "federation of families" analogy must be revised: better to speak of "competing bands." In this competition between "us" and "them," where "them" is *both* the state and one's own competitors in Society, there also arise competing codes of morality. There are values applied to oneself (and to "us") and values applied to

32. I discuss this further in "Rich Families and Poor Collectives," "Muddling through in Romania," and "Is Romania the Next Poland?", all *op. cit.*

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others ("them"). This "dimorphism of values" (as the Polish sociologist Wnuk-Lipinski has termed it) has its counterpart in the Romanian concept of *dedublarea* ("duplicity"), the Czech, "Living The Lie," and Glasov's concept of "behavioral bilingualism."[33] The long-term persistence of such dimorphism produces "social schizophrenia" in society, the result of which can be either apathy or social eruption. Regardless of the terms used, its manifestations are well known: the state and its formal institutions are placed beyond the sphere of moral obligations. They become part of nature, to be used and exploited when needed. A peasant does not work *for* the collective farm but *on* the collective farm for his own household objectives.

In similar fashion, interpersonal relations outside the immediate private sphere are subject to a different moral code. Lying at a Party meeting or to one's boss is not lying, but "an action of self-defense," as Simecka writes.[34] Whereas traditional values of truth and authenticity apply to private relations of friends and family, in the public sphere "untruth is not only unpunished but even rewarded. . . . After all, [citizens] were taught to lie at school and to conceal their convictions. They learned to lie at their place of work. . . . They lie in forms, they lie to bureaucrats, they lie to the courts, they lie to their superiors. Quite simply, they lie when they get a chance."[35]

However, this behavior is supposed to be restricted to encounters outside the private sphere. The same people to whom lying comes naturally are thus "horror struck and aggrieved by their children's first lie to them at home, and they are filled with disgust if friends lie or conceal something from them."[36]

To reveal in the public sphere one's inner self, one's real thoughts, is not a sign of authenticity but of stupidity. The public sphere is a forum for demonstrating one's ability to misrepresent oneself, one's "*Ketman*."[37]

In Eastern Europe, where so many resources are owned or allocated by the state, this social schizophrenia consolidates itself. Whereas stealing from a Western farm is stealing from somebody — Farmer Jones — stealing from a Romanian, Hungarian or Bulgarian collective farm is stealing from "them." It is not "stealing" at all, but simply "taking one's share," a notion also found in many Western workplaces or among poachers in the European countryside. Like nature herself, the state and its organizational resources are simply there, for the taking. Hence, the Hungarian sociologist Janos Kenedi warns: "We must not do away with the state. It's the only one we have. And if there were no state, it would have to be invented."[38] An anonymous Czech put the

33. E. Wnuk-Lipinski, "Dimorphism of Values and Social Schizophrenia — a Tentative Description," in *Sisyphus — Sociological Studies*, vol. 3, *Crises and Conflicts: The Case of Poland 1980-1981* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1982) p. 81ff.; S. Sampson, "Muddling through in Romania," *op. cit.*; M. Simecka, *The Restoration of Order*, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-127; Y. Glasov, *The Russian Mind Since Stalin's Death*, *op. cit.*, p. 74-77.

34. M. Simecka, *The Restoration of Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

37. "*Ketman*" is described by C. Milosz in *The Captive Mind* (New York: Vintage, 1981 [1953]), pp. 54-82.

38. J. Kenedi, *Do It Yourself: Hungary's Hidden Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

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problem of competing moral spheres more bluntly: "He who does not rob the state robs his family."

Kenedi describes how he went about building a house using materials, labor, expertise and even cash unofficially supplied or simply stolen from state enterprises and offices. He provides an incisive description of the different forms of exchange in the second economy. Most obvious is the *cash payment*, bribe or tip, which is usually given when "buyer" and "seller" (of merchandise, service or information) do not really know each other.[39] Exchange may also take on a non-cash form, as in the *mutual favors* done between two acquaintances. The repairman may fix the house of his son's schoolteacher, or a factory director may "lend" some laborers to his counterpart across town, who needs them to build his summer house. Finally, the second economy can be based on personal networks of friends and relatives who *fulfill obligations*. In these cases the parties expect no immediate or equal payment; they turn to each other when needed, and no accounting is kept.

The precise use of cash, favors or personal obligations will depend on specific circumstances. Cash bribes will frequently be used when only a one-time relation is expected. However, someone who begins by paying a cash bribe may end up establishing more long-term relations of friendship. What was a "connection" may become a "friend." For example, a customer in a shoe store may bribe the sales clerk so that she holds a good pair of shoes under the counter. *Prices* of shoes are controlled by the state. Instead, there is competition in obtaining the *privilege to buy*. The price of obtaining access may be as much as the actual price of the shoes. Yet, the sales clerk herself may not need money as much as she needs connections. Perhaps she discovers that the person paying the bribe is a teacher. Perhaps she has a son who needs extra tutoring to pass his examinations. The sales clerk holds the high quality shoes as they come in, and the teacher offers the tutoring. A cash transaction has now become a relation of mutual favors, and favors can develop into a more stable system based on "friendship." For both parties, a more stable "friendship" relation is a less risky transaction. There is no cash passed around, and friends are more dependable than any illicit business partner.

The connection between the teacher and the salesclerk may extend itself. Perhaps the teacher knows a butcher. The salesclerk tells the teacher to send the butcher's wife whenever she needs shoes. In this way the saleslady can assure herself of a stable supply of meat, perhaps free. It is in this way that

39. In other East European countries, the "cash" may take different forms. In Poland, bribes of dollars are preferred over *zlotys*. In Romania, where possession of Western currency is generally illegal, bribes are often paid in Western cigarettes, particularly "Kents." Being universal, anonymous, easily transportable, non-spoilable, and divisible into cartons, packs or individual cigarettes, Kents function much like cash in Romania. Kents are also a commodity, purchased in special tourist shops by Romanians who have been abroad and earned Western currency or by needy foreign students who resell them for *lei*. The price of a pack of Kents has nearly trebled in the last decade, partly due to the rise in the price of the dollar, partly due to the increasing scarcity of quality goods and services and fear of taking cash bribes. Finally, the Kent economy also has its counterfeiters who fill Kent cartons with cheap Romanian cigarettes and resell them. And, of course, Kents manufactured in Yugoslavia and Poland under license are not acceptable.

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goods and services are distributed throughout Eastern Europe. It is a system that brings together widely disparate social categories: the teacher and the shoeclerk, the butcher and the doctor, etc. Status hierarchies are turned upside down.[40]

Two points should be brought out here: first, that this "unplanned" economy is not as separate from the formal economy as it may seem on first sight. Any of the resources used in the "unplanned" economy are borrowed, stolen or otherwise appropriated from the state: the shoeclerk does not sell 'her' shoes, she sells the privilege to buy the *state's* shoes. The "black" worker steals "time" from the state if he is using his day to make extra money; the truckdriver who helps the private peasant take a load of potatoes into town is stealing time and cargo space from the state and giving away state gasoline, while pocketing money from the peasant woman.

The second point to be emphasized here is that money plays only a minor role in this unplanned economy. Resources are exchanged and re-distributed, but not necessarily bought and sold. Marx's communist prophecy has come true in a kind of left-handed way: people *are* more important than money. Whom you know is more important than the money you have.

*Friendship, "Friendship," and Prestige*

The informal economy which has emerged in Eastern Europe also transforms the character of social relations within these societies. Friendships evolve as much out of economic necessity as from the need for emotional satisfaction. To use the terms put forward by Eric Wolf, friendship in these societies is "instrumental" rather than "sentimental."[41] Friends are "people who can do things for you." A real friend can mobilize his own resources or those of *his* friends to help you procure what you need. Moreover; it follows that if a friend cannot do anything for you, he is not a true friend. Unlike exchanges in a market place, the exchanges between friends are always out of balance. One always owes the other something, since the value of the exchange can never be calculated exactly. For example, "*A*" may help "*B*" obtain a spare part of *B*'s car, but *B* knows of a good heart specialist who can treat *A*'s mother. The vague boundary between instrumental and sentimental ties puts pressure on many relations in Eastern Europe. Jealousy and suspicion coexist with intimacy and trust. A friend who demands too much suddenly becomes a burden. A friend who gives too much makes oneself embarrassed. The promotion of a friend into a high position turns an equal into a superior, a horizontal link into a vertical tie.

40. This is best illustrated by a Romanian joke: a man walking home one night sees a drunk lying on the sidewalk. "Take me home, please," says the drunk. "I'm a butcher. If you take me home I'll give you five kilos of meat." Since meat is always scarce in Romania the man takes the drunk home to his apartment. The drunk's wife thanks the man for his kindness. "What about my meat?" the man asks. "What meat?" replies the wife, "We don't have any meat." "But your husband promised me five kilos of meat if I brought him home. He's a butcher isn't he? And everyone knows all butchers have plenty of meat." The wife laughs: "Butcher! Is that what he said! No, I'm sorry, my poor husband, he's only an engineer."

41. E. Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies," *op. cit.*, p. 10. Wolf's article, however, does not deal with Eastern Europe specifically.

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Now these problems are of course not peculiar to East European societies alone. However, because friends are needed to obtain more of life's bare necessities, these problems become more serious. In periods of economic crisis, everyone demands more of their friends; someone undergoing police investigation for dissident opinions may suddenly lose some friends or gain others.[42] Schlapentokh, in his study of Soviet friendship, points out that much of the activity of friends consists of collusion against the formal system.[43] Friendships are thus a repository of secrets against the state. Conversely, the KGB "informer" is someone who, masquerading as a friend, betrays these secrets.

Friendships are also repositories of secrets against family units. Here again is another source of tension, in that one network within the informal system may be pitted against another. Friends help arrange the love affair at the empty apartment, cover for you when you are drinking, etc.[44]

The functions of friendship, i.e., the balance between the instrumental and the sentimental relations, will vary from one society to another or from one historical period to another. The harsh repression of the Stalinist period in the USSR destroyed many friendships, whereas today they have achieved a more stable and relatively sentimental character (according to Glasov). Conversely, the economic scarcity and political tensions in Romania have served to transform many sentimental friendships into more instrumental ones. As a result, people have closed their circle to immediate kin and very close friends where demands on time, money and energy are not held in account, and where bonds of trust are more secure.[45]

Using alternative means to procure scarce resources also helps generate alternative scales of prestige and values. In the West, money can usually buy

42. Simecka writes: "Their acquaintances will now think twice about going to see them or inviting them to their homes. And for heaven's sake, we mustn't call them, because their phone is bound to be tapped . . . . 'Good friends' torture themselves with doubts before gradually realizing that they were never really good friends of the interrogated person at all. And they say to themselves: 'If they come visiting us . . . we won't turn them away. But we'd better not pay them any visits . . . . But the friends . . . will have become aware of a cooling of relations . . . . It is a novel and ingenious form of internment. You are free to move about but in human terms you are an internee. All you have left are your most loyal friends, who are in the same boat as your are.' " *The Restoration of Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

43. *Love, Marriage and Friendship in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-245.

44. Both Schlapentokh and Glasov concur on this point. Glasov writes: "Together with the family, the community of neighbors creates that atmosphere of surveillance around a person in which no privacy can really exist . . . . Relationships with one's colleagues are not much better than relationships with one's neighbors . . . . It is in his relationships with friends . . . that a person in the Soviet Union might be relatively free . . . . In making friends, a person invites another individual into the sacred tower of his thoughts and the fortress of his family . . . . In Russia, a close friend is one from whom no secret is kept . . . . These friendships can provide relief, relaxation or important information on world events." Cf. *The Russian Mind Since Stalin's Death*, *op. cit.*, p. 77-78.

45. "Hard" social science confirmation is difficult here. However, in continuous visits to Romania, which is plagued with economic scarcity and political tensions in recent years, informants underline how "people have become 'bad'," how they "don't have energy for others anymore," that "each must solve his own problems," which can range from procuring milk supplies for young children to a residence permit to remain in Bucharest, to an exit visa for emigrating.

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anything. In the East, a lot of people have enough money to pay the price of a given item or service, but cannot locate it. To "stand in line" for coffee, meat, theatre tickets, residents permits or a new apartment means that you have the cash, but are without the necessary social connections. Those who bypass the line have wide circles of friends, clients with reliable information or strategically placed patrons. They can "find" that package of imported coffee, "hold" that kilo of fresh beef, "arrange" to get your son into the Law Faculty, or move you to the top of the list for the new apartment. Many East European (and Western) intellectuals routinely condemn the "consumerism" of East Europeans as a kind of false consciousness which takes them away from more important social or political tasks.[46] Such views — besides being elitist and ethnocentric — also misunderstand the function of consumer goods and services in East European societies. Procuring scarce resources is itself a means of demonstrating "social wealth," and East Europeans themselves have understood that it is social wealth rather than possession of cash that is important in these societies. It is not *having a video* that is important; rather it is the fact that *you* have a video. For people do not ask, "where did he get the cash," but "who does he know" in order to locate it.

The prestige of social connections in Eastern Europe has led to a situation where people often use them even when they do not have to. For example, many Romanians will insist on getting a personal reference to buy a train or plane ticket even when there are plenty of tickets available. Having more trust in powerful persons than bureaucratic institutions, they will ask a person with influence (or perceived influence) to "intervene" for them with the bureaucracy even when it is unnecessary. Those in powerful positions go along; their clients believe they have received special treatment when they have in fact done nothing special at all. This only enhances the myth of the effectiveness of the personal connection *vis à vis* the formal system.

Social connections, then, are not just a *utilitarian* "last resort" when the formal system does not work. They are *normative*, the proper way to do things, even when the bureaucracy *does* work.[47] For it is via one's personal connections that one demonstrates to oneself and others one's social position. In this sense, the informal sector truly becomes institutionalized, not only in terms of behavior but also in terms of values and perceived needs. These are the wider ramifications of Schlapentokh's remark on the gradual "Georgianization of Soviet society."[48]

*When does a System "Work"?*

The existence of a normative informal sector does not mean that the formal

46. Cf. Cole, "Problems of Socialism in Eastern Europe," *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248; B. Kerblay on "Aquisitiveness" in his *Modern Soviet Society* (New York: Pantheon, 1983) pp. 283-285; Vale ed., *Poland: The State of the Republic*, *op. cit.*

47. A crucial point in the argument of Mars and Altman for Georgia's underground economy; see their "Cultural Basis of Georgia's Second Economy," *op. cit.* A similar argument is made for Southern Italy by A. Galt, "Rethinking Patron-Client Relationships: The Real System and the Official System in Southern Italy," in *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 47 (1974), p. 56ff.

48. Schlapentokh, *Love, Marriage and Friendship in the Soviet Union*, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

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system "does not work." It only means that the formal system works *differently* because of the particular character of informal social structures in these societies. Certainly, it would be an exaggeration to see the corruptive aspects of informal structures as a threat to the formal organization in Eastern Europe. Such a view would overlook the mutual interdependence between the two sectors. For example, much of the informal economy is effective precisely because it can steal or borrow from formal resources without incurring costs (except for bribes to police, etc.)

One might wonder as to the degree to which citizens or the regimes themselves might want to restrict the informal systems in order to make formal organizations run more effectively. Soviet campaigns against corruption and the Chinese impetus to transform particularistic friendship into a more organized "comradeship" both seem to demonstrate regime desire to do away with the support mechanisms underlying informal structures.[49] Nevertheless, such efforts would meet opposition not only among the citizenry, but even among the elites themselves.

As far as the citizens are concerned, many of the informal sector's patrons and brokers obtain clear financial benefits and social prestige from the continually scarce resources. If a well-functioning economic, planning, social, information or bureaucratic system existed, these people would lose their clients. They would become superfluous. Hence, they have a vested interest in keeping these systems running *in*efficiently, in restricting access to goods, services, social networks or information.

From the regime's perspective, not cracking down on informal networks helps channel the population's social discontent into a prestige competition or rumor mongering, both of which are clearly less dangerous than direct political activities. "It is no accident" (as Radio Moscow would say), that widespread economic corruption is tolerated throughout Eastern Europe, while the smallest political dissident group is subjected to harsh police repression. The second economy and other informal channels thus perform a safety-valve function. While they may corrupt *parts* of the system, they keep the system *as a whole* muddling through (a point also stressed by Schöpflin in his analysis of informalism and corruption in Eastern Europe). Moreover, information channels and other resources can be manipulated by the state. Resources are *kept* scarce and organizations function inefficiently such that people compete for friends, connections and patrons to help them procure these resources. Not only is Society in conflict with the State, but it is also in competition with itself. In this situation, it is individual solutions which predominate: people do not demonstrate against meat shortages but ask, "who do I know who can get *me* some meat?"

Here the Polish exception provides an instructive case. The most active members of the labor movement in Poland were young first and second generation workers living in cities, especially Gdansk and Nowa Huta. Until

49. E. Vogel, "From Friendship to Comradeship: The Change in Personal Relations in China," in *The China Quarterly*, no. 21 (January-March 1965), pp. 46ff.

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1980, these workers could augment the resources obtained via official, state channels with those obtained informally, i.e., via the second economy or connections to the countryside. When the official economy began to collapse, however, the second economy was unable to compensate. Not only did the system not "work" in a benign fashion, but it could not even muddle through with corruption. Workers were thus forced to mobilize politically.[50] Informal organization took on new functions in this mobilization.

*Informal Organization as Opposition*

Those who do not succumb to atomization, who seek to organize their social networks to challenge the political order, or to form corporate interest groups, become especially dangerous for the regime. This was the case with KOR and *Solidarnosc* in Poland, with Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and with virtually every unofficial peace, religious or human rights group in the Soviet Union, Romania or East Germany. Only in Hungary do the authorities allow the peace and environmental groups to operate somewhat more openly, and this in order to manage them more easily. In the rest of Eastern Europe, members of such organizations are regarded as "subversive," "sick," "deviant" or as "tools of foreign powers." Police organs have used cooptation, intimidation, jail, house arrest, censorship or exile in order to eliminate such groups.

However, since dissidents' activities impinge on the public sphere, they become tainted with the same kind of disdain, duplicity or social schizophrenia which characterize other public activities. They are seen to have "ulterior motives." Since they often seek to expose the same kind of hypocrisy which most citizens are forced to live with daily, they may be seen by fellow citizens as egotists, manipulative, or even "sick."[51] The idea that one's genuine private beliefs would be expressed through public behavior seems incomprehensible (if not just plain stupid) for those in the upper reaches of East European bureaucracies. In 1977, the Romanian dissident writer Paul Goma was called into the office of the Minister of Culture, and asked, "What do you *really* want? A summer house? To publish your book? A better apartment? To emigrate?" Goma resisted this appeal to more immediate needs and was then treated more harshly. He was put under house arrest. Informal channels spread rumors that he was "a bad writer," that he was not really of Romanian origin, that his small human rights group was just a bunch of opportunists. In the end, many members of Goma's group did in fact leave Romania, while Goma himself was forced into exile. Some Romanians (and members of non-Romanian minority groups) had in fact attached themselves to the Goma movement solely in order to emigrate, to receive what came to be called the "Goma passport." The Romanian regime, however, cleverly transformed a

50. The comparative effectiveness of these informal networks is discussed in O. Norgaard and S. Sampson, "Poland's Crisis and East European Socialism," *op. cit.*, and S. Sampson, "Is Romania the Next Poland?" *op. cit.*

51. "The dissidents wanted to be monolingual in a society which allows only a schizophrenic existence." And "Russian dissidents expressed loudly exactly what other people thought privately but, for obvious reasons, preferred not to say" (Glasov, *The Russian Mind*, *op. cit.*, p. 76, 113).

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movement for free speech into a bunch of "cases," encouraging people to use the movement to achieve individual solutions. In this sense, the Goma movement became further discredited in the eyes of the population.

The failure of the Goma movement in Romania, however, should not mask the fact that informal channels were essential to its organization. In fact, Glasov, speaking of Soviet dissent, defines dissent "as the attempt of some segments of the Russian cultural world to create their own network of communications for sharing information . . . . Dissent includes meeting with friends and foreigners and speaking with them about life in Russia."[52] Similarly, actions such as signing letters of protest, were "act[s] of solidarity with persons to whom one was bound by longstanding friendship or with whom one had spent many an evening . . . . [A]ll who were inimical to Stalinism and the prison camps were mutual friends."[53]

Informal channels were variously used among intellectuals and workers in Poland's *Solidarity* movement. Poland's alternative universities, newspapers, informal communication systems and underground cells of intellectuals and workers have all been successful in sheltering *Solidarity* activists from the police and in propagating *Solidarity*'s message.[54]

Within *Solidarity* itself, the most active factions — the shipyard workers and miners — were themselves mobilized on the basis of informal networks. These occupations are traditionally recruited on the basis of kinship and village ties and passed down through generations. Their work groups were thus more integrated, and the intimate nature of their work was such that they could not be easily penetrated by police informers or agents. The so-called self-organization of Polish society, the "horizontal structures" of the *Solidarity* movement, presented a direct challenge to the regime for two reasons. The obvious reason is that this organization stood for different political values challenging the hegemony of the party. But more important is that the Polish self-organization challenged the formal organization of society on *formal organizational terms*. That is, it was not just a case of informal structures corrupting the system, but informal networks used to build an oppositional organization which functioned in the public sphere. During the post-Solidarity period, the so-called normalization, the task of the regime is not only to eliminate the threat of Civil Society against the State, but to get Society competing with itself again, to reinstitute "competing bands," even at the risk of further corruption.

Thus, informal organization can have features which are system-maintaining, system corrupting, or system-threatening. What appears to be dysfunctional

52. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

54. T. Ash, "Poland: The Uses of Adversity," in *The New York Review of Books*, vol 33 (July 17, 1985), p. 5ff. For a comparative study of how different occupational groups mobilize for social movements see J. Montias, "Economic Conditions and Political Instability in Communist Countries: Observations on Strikes, Riots and Other Disturbances," in *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 13 (1980), p. 283ff. For personal descriptions of how informal channels were used in workers' mobilization, see "Seventeen Hot Days, as Seen by the Participants of the Strikes in the Coastal Region in August 1980," in *Sisyphus*, *op. cit.*, p. 252ff.

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for a specific enterprise or sector may help reinforce the elites' hold on political power. Of course, the individual states of Eastern Europe exhibit considerable variation in the extent to which informal organization has benign or corruptive effects. In Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, the provisioning of basic consumer goods is quite adequate. Informal structures will be used to obtain luxury (status marking) goods, high quality repairs, scarce resources from the bureaucracy, and the like.

In the more crisis-ridden parts of Eastern Europe such as Poland and Romania, which are both economically poor and politically volatile due to frustrated expectations on the part of the population, informal networks have to be used at a level previously unsurpassed, even to procure basic foods and consumer goods.

In Poland, the economic crisis of the late 1970s generated political effects, and Polish informal networks were used to *spark a social movement*. In Romania, the informal sector remains at the level of *benign aid* to the system (e.g., rumors) or as *corrupting* (second economy). Hence, there remains competition among networks of workers or peasant-workers, different ethnic groups, and between workers and intellectuals. Under conditions which seriously discourage the rise of alternative public forums ("what we want," "us" against "them"), Romanians are naturally cautious about renouncing what patrons, brokers and clients already have. Instead of "what we want" it is "who you know." This emphasis on individual solutions was lamented by one Romanian, who commented, "If we had *Solidarity* here, each Romanian would have his own."

*Conclusions*

Informal structures and unauthorized ways of doing things are part of every society. However, they are more important for Eastern Europe because so many resources are concentrated in the sphere of formal state organizations, and because these organizations are incapable of fulfilling their assigned tasks. Because of the historical gap between Society and State institutions, informal structures come to take on a life of their own, seemingly autonomous from the formal, official system. This is not to say that informal structures are themselves stable or timeless. To establish the extent of the stability we would have to trace the dynamics of the informal sector. For example, we might trace conjunctures in which *in*formal institutions become a barometer of system viability. Hence, when informal structures function benignly, the system "works." When they function "corruptively" the system is "muddling through" or "in stagnation." When informal structures are used largely for system-threatening purposes, we see a system in "decay," "crisis," or "revolt."

If the crisis is resolved, "faith in the state" and its institutions are restored, such that informal structures are again of minor, benign importance. This is typically the outcome of social revolutions. The "new order" creates short-term loyalties and a mobilization effectiveness which momentarily supplant family, friendship, ethnicity or other primoridal ties. The question then arises as to why these primordial ties begin to reassert themselves, i.e., why revolutionary elan fails and "thermidors" re-appear.

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In addition to tracing the relation between formal and informal loyalties, we could also trace cycles of dominance *within* the informal sector: under what conditions does friendship become instrumental instead of affective? At what point do family ties give way to other informal structures based on ethnicity, networks or regional identities? How do the categories "us" and "them" change their boundaries? What is the relation between the "microstructures" of the socialist society and reforms or changes in the macrostructure?

For the time being, however, we must deal with the political realities of East European societies — realities ultimately guaranteed by Soviet tanks. In this situation, East Europeans will most likely opt for individualistic solutions, and informal structures will be utilized for this purpose. The emergence of opposition movements may be more inspiring than *blat* networks or friends who collude against the state. However, it is the repression of these movements which seems to be more instructive for East Europeans. To use the words of Zdenek Mlynar, this is "what real socialism does to people."[55]

East Europeans will thus continue to forge and maintain personal relations, to "adapt,"[56] to search for personal alliances, to trust in family and friends, and cultivate patrons and brokers rather than throwing their allegiance into the arms of the formal apparatus. Instead of formal opposition, their opposition will consist of apathy at work, disdain for the party and Marxist ideology, a concern with private goals and individual mobility, and teaching their children that it is OK to lie in school but not at home; in other words, a permanent state of social schizophrenia, dimorphism of values and behavioral bilingualism.

The East European political elites will continue to use informal organization to help maintain their power and achieve economic objectives. They will try to neutralize its most corruptive effects, or manipulate them so that they drain popular energy from social movements into individual competition. As the informal sector becomes institutionalized by the East European regimes, it reveals the crisis — or defeat — of regime goals: there will be no sturdy or effective organizations, no "new socialist man," no trust in formal institutions, no "faith in the state." New forms of inequality will not only be tolerated: they will be stimulated.

Lenin's "party of a new type" has spawned "societies of a new type." They are a curious mixture of bureaucracy and informalism, of order and chaos, of muddling through and perpetual crises, of a depressed, atomized population which is also inventive and adaptable. To call these societies "planned societies" would certainly be a misnomer. Rather, they are "societies with a plan." These unplanned aspects, as channeled through and manifested by informal structures, alternative information channels and oppositional values, were cer-

55. In his preface to Simecka's book *op. cit.*

56. Discussing "the adaptation factor," Simecka writes: "Adaptation in existing socialism is a unique form of social contract such as Jean-Jacques would have had difficulty in conceiving." *The Restoration of Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Zinoviev's *Reality of Communism*, *op. cit.*, is also an argument for long-term adaptation and stability in these systems.

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tainly not desired by the East European elites. But they cannot do without them either.

Life in Eastern Europe will continue to revolve around the dual poles of what Romanians call "*PCR*." This PCR includes both the leading formal institution of the country, *Partidul Comunist Roman* and the set of informal structures known jokingly as *pile*, *cunoştiinţă şi relaţii* ("fixers, acquaintances and connections"). Until faith in the formal institutions can be restored, a faith which hinges on fundamental changes in the political order, in the relation between State and Society, or at least a heightened degree of economic prosperity, these two PCRs will continue to operate in all the countries of Eastern Europe. No matter whether it is cause or symptom, whether benign, corruptive or threatening, the informal sector will remain as much a part of these societies as Five Year Plans and May Day parades.

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# FORMS OF REASONING AS IDEOLOGY

## by Jadwiga Staniszkis

The following will analyze a surprising symmetry between the Leninist mode of reasoning and *Solidarity*'s behavior[1] with the help of Lévi-Strauss' notion of *bricolage*[2] and Besançon's concept of "surreality."[3] A basic dualism pervades both communist ideology, i.e., the Leninist interpretation of Marxism, and everyday consciousness in "really existing socialist" societies. This dualism will be counterposed to a two-level thought, in which the world of ideas and the world of things are qualitatively different.

This approach obviously clashes with the conventional wisdom on the subject, both in Eastern Europe and in the West. Thus, it is claimed that, e.g., liberal or neo-conservative themes appear both in Poland and in the West. But in Poland these themes do not reflect the interests of civil society. Some of their elements are merely cultural signs, used in the intellectual patchwork of the *bricolage* to define social identity in a system lacking a genuine civil society. On the other hand, too much is made of intellectual differences among the various East European countries. On one level this is true, since the cultural material in particular countries is indeed different. Yet, the forms of thought characterized by dualism and by *bricolage* reasoning remain similar. This dualism was already present in Russia before the revolution in the form of the Platonic elements in Orthodox thought, and the non-occurrence of the intellectual turning point of critical nominalism[4] which eventually resulted in a

1. This account is based on material collected in 1980-81 by Maria Lewicka and Maria Pacewicz, "Mechanizmy postaw spolecno-politycznych w latach 1980-81," paper delivered at the Institute of Psychology, Warsaw University, October 1981; Piotr Pacewicz, *Pomiedzy mysla i rzeczywistoscie* (Ossolinium 1984); Maria Marody, "Poles 1980," mimeo (Warsaw University, 1981); Rychard Andrzej and others, "Poles 1980, 81, 82," mimeo, Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw). See also my own study of political fundamentalism in *Krytyka* No. 16 (Warsaw, 1983). The Leninist mode of reasoning was reconstructed on the basis of Party documents by A. Lazarski. See also my "Types of Ideological Thinking in Real Socialism" in *Krytyka* No. 19 (Warsaw, 1983).

2. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage*, Chapter 1.

3. Alain Besançon, *Court Traité de Sovietologie* (Paris, 1976). Besançon uses "surreality" to describe communist ideology that claims to be an expression of "objective historical necessity," independent of individual wills.

4. Post-Scholastic critical nominalism developed in Western Europe at the turn of the 13th century in opposition to Scholastic realism. It postulated a separate ontological status for concepts and for things, and rejected the real existence of general concepts — the so-called universals. It also emphasized empiricism and individualism. This intellectual revolution seems to be a necessary precondition for the appearance, centuries later, of protestantism, with its doctrine of predestination. It was in this doctrine that the theory of the separate ontological statuses of the world of things and the world of concepts found its ultimate consequences. See A.C. Crombie, *Medieval and Early Modern Science* (London, 1959), and H.O. Taylor, *The Medieval Mind* (London, 1938).



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peculiar reception of Hegelian thought. These cultural factors, combined with the lack of a civil society in Russia where the economy functioned essentially as a control mechanism, influenced Leninism as a peculiar Russian interpretation of Marxism. With the possible exception of Bulgaria, in other East European countries dualism in common thought is less linked to cultural tradition than to the *current epistemological* predicament of "really existing socialism," i.e., Marxism-Leninism.

Surreality and *bricolage* perform a remarkable ideological function within "really existing socialism." The reality built on the a priori assumptions of communist ideology has its counterpart in common thought, which is also predominantly aprioristic. Ironically, as *Solidarity*'s case shows, the two structures become even more similar in conflict situations. The formal similarity of the two modes of reasoning consists in the dualism they both assume. Thus, phenomena are classified by comparing them with the "ideal" as a privileged domain, while normal discourse also seeks legitimacy in that "ideal" rather than in the empirical world. Moreover, the ideal is interpreted as isomorphic with the world of things.

The dualism in communist thinking is related to the influence of Platonic themes, through Orthodoxy, in Marxism-Leninism and to the Hegelianism and gnostic tradition predominant in Marx's original thought.[5] On the common sense level, dualism has different sources in the specific *epistemological situation* of people living within communist institutions.[6] The main features of this epistemological situation are: 1) these institutions, by continually breaking up the social tissue, fail to provide any safe ground to define oneself in the system. 2) There is no place for civil society and occasional pluralizations during crisis situations cannot be defined as a genuine civil society. 3) The state-determined technical division of labor cannot be separated from the social division of labor.[7] When the two are so closely interwoven, it is difficult to identify opponents in conflicts. 4) To do this is difficult anyway, because of the nature of accumulation and exploitation[8] "really existing socialism" and because

5. Cf. Alain Besançon, *Les Origines Intellectualles du Leninisme* (Calman-levy, 1977), Leszek Kolankowski, *Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1982), Eric Vögelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, 1952).

6. The formal structures of those institutions do not add up to a system. This is an indication of their artificial character. In fact, each of their structural characteristics is a result of a different causal pattern and those institutions have thus no inner capacity for adaptation. Moreover, functionally different organizations tend to become similar to each other. See K. Mrela and J. Staniszkis, "Organizational Structures," in *Przeglad Organizacji* No. 1, 1976.

7. State involvement cannot be avoided as it is the necessary completion of non-exclusive and incomplete property rights. The technical division of labor here refers to what is indispensable for the system's material reproduction, given the type of ownership of means of production, while the social division redundantly defends established power and privileges. See my article "Property Rights, Rationality, Structure and Dynamics" in *Przeglad polityczny*, No. 4, samizdat (Gdansk, 1984).

8. In "really existing socialism," accumulation need not involve capital formation in the state sector. Its source can be the transfer of resources from other sectors by administrative manipulation. Exploitation in "really existing socialism" is double. 1) Direct, as the State-owner appropriates surplus value. And, 2) indirect, through charging the whole society with the costs of systemic inefficiency of systemically determined losses brought about by incomplete pricing of

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the State can so easily cover up major problems by means of administrative actions.[9] Besides, with this type of ownership, some of the symptoms of the economic crisis, even if visible, would not be regarded as personal losses by anyone in particular.[10] 5) Really existing socialism's "non-economizing economy," based on administrative redistribution, cannot be perceived by its participants as the economic process. Furthermore, in this system, it is difficult to speak of economic interests in a sense that would be rational by economic standards. Rather, there are material needs satisfied by the mediation of the arbitrary, administrative redistribution of goods and incomes (directed by the rationality of control), or by shameful mechanisms of the second economy. Even economic conflicts depend more on arbitrary management conventions than on objective economic mechanisms. Thus, their identification becomes fairly difficult.[11] 6) The Hegelian notion of "the indifferent variety" best describes how the social structure is experienced from the previously mentioned epistemological situation. Accordingly, each part of the social fabric exists for itself and is indifferent to all others, so that it is unclear which differences are significant. Isolated by the administrative redistribution mechanisms, these parts are neither attracted nor repelled by each other, as they would be in an economically viable environment. Within this content *one's place in the structure can be located only by resorting to an array of cultural signs and ideological clichés independent of actual social interactions and never verified by them.*[12]

the factors of production; of income losses brought about by doctrinal preselection of the goals and means of endeavors; and finally, of the costs to maintain the overgrown state apparatus as the substitute for the missing dimensions of property rights. Under "really existing socialism" it is impossible to tell exactly where direct exploitation is located, because of the arbitrary character of the economic semantics and the uncontrolled externalization of the costs and benefits of economic activity.

9. The present situation in Poland is a good example. The creeping economic crisis evades perception because its sharpest symptoms have largely dropped out of sight and have been replaced by invisible phenomena such as the increasing costs of achieving small production increments; the intensification of the struggle for resources among various bureaucratic apparatuses and the increasing costs of maintaining a growing bureaucracy; the increasing debt of the State to society due to informal appropriation of a part of amortization and old pension deductions to balance the state budget; the decapitalization of the fixed assets; the increase of taxes imposed on the private sector; and finally the specific form of economic pressure, regarded paradoxically as a privilege and creating guilt feelings in those subject to it (e.g., paying miners for work on Saturdays and Sundays with checks negotiable in special retail outlets with more and better goods).

10. One example is the decapitalization of fixed assets. In "really existing socialism," no legal or physical persons have specified shares in permanent assets (the means of production). Consequently, no one considers their decapitalization as a cost.

11. Cf. A. Rychard, "Interests and Conflicts in Industry" (Polish Academy of Sciences, 1982), mimeo. In response to the question "Who gains from the work of state-owned enterprises?" the Black Market profiteers and not the state apparatus ranked first. Later results (1984, Sociology of Organizations Workshop in Warsau University) indicate that, in spite of obvious frustration, as people ceased to apply *a priori* moral judgements in their classifications, they apparently did not know how to answer the question "What divides the Poles?"

12. According to Rychard, *op. cit.*, the main criterion of social division in popular consciousness used to be moral standards (with *a priori* negative judgements ascribed to the power apparatus), before wealth and education. Thus, mass revolt in Poland could break out because of the broad impact of the Church, especially the Pope's 1979 visit which, combined with the emotional experience triggered by *Solidarity*'s strikes, allowed the articulation of the protest in the

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This state of affairs is as I have mentioned, what Lévi-Strauss has described as *bricolage*.

The "surreality" of the power apparatus and the *bricolage* of common sense are transformed in a situation of revolt, and the two become symmetrical. In this new context, it becomes very urgent to define one's own and one's opponent's identity. This is done by reorganizing the loose array of cultural signs underlying the *bricolage* into a system which represents a peculiar type of "surreality" independent of and opposed to the official one. This is what happened in Poland after August 1980 when, alongside the normal "indifferent variety" of daily interactions, a new, highly polarized moral definition of the situation was constructed. That definition resembled "surreality" not only in that it was built on *a priori* assumptions, but also because it had its own dynamics, independent of actual events. For example, while *Solidarity* formally existed, when people who previously employed a restricted linguistic code learned to think in more abstract terms, they found this new perspective and these new concepts easier to absorb in a highly polarized context. Their cognitive radicalism, i.e., striving toward a simplicity of form based on unambiguous opposition, did not amount to political radicalism — although it was often mistaken for it, both by outside observers and by the people involved. This mistaken interpretation, however, has had important political consequences and was itself an important ideological fact. Cognitive radicalism tends to involve emotionally indifferent organizational ramifications, hard to grasp in clear terms. The resulting feeling of uneasiness can be overcome by imposing a lucid form on one's own thinking. Sometimes people record social events and believe in them only if what happens is close to the structure of their own thought. The continuous social process remains invisible, until it is squeezed into *a priori* forms and determined by mechanisms other than the reality at hand. This kind of self-inflicted blindness was at work during the period of *Solidarity*'s formal existence and had serious political consequences.[13]

As in *bricolage*, here also thought relies on cultural signs having their own dynamics independent of actual events. This *bricolage* way of thinking cannot successfully grasp real processes and it is misleading to try to function socially according to its ambiguous cultural signs. Thus, "really existing socialism" exhibits a segmented social structure kept segmented by administrative redistribution mechanisms and thus failing to effectively interact as it might if the economic mechanisms had been viable. Since cultural signs are employed as

language of a moral surreality competing with official ideology. In the Soviet Union this would not have been possible given, among other things, the language used by the Orthodox Church.

13. Thus, *Solidarity*'s fundamentalists failed to pay attention to what the other side was doing. In this respect, they tended to miss everything that could not be translated into symbolic terms of status competition. This is why they were not interested in the creation of the second chamber of Parliament, with a charter that would not allow for open electoral confrontation with the party. Likewise, they were indifferent to the ruling group's efforts to change their language of legitimation by substituting the concept of a social contract recognizing both sides for the vanguard analysis.

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guidelines, both the power structure and the working class often evaluate themselves by relying on the mythologized intelligentsia.[14] Paradoxically enough, the status of the intelligentsia is construed in such mythical form that most people in white collar occupations cannot fit into them. Thus, actual social differences cannot be readily grasped. The intelligentsia's mythical status is sustained by rituals to which all conflicting segments resort whenever they risk losing symbolic identification.

Another example of how social space in "really existing socialism" is perceived in terms of cultural signs is the concept of dignity as the standard to assess the position of one's own group with respect to others. Dignity and the mechanisms for restoring it also have a strong ritual dimension: a tease or insult must be reversed by means of a definite symbolic action.[15] This contributes considerably to the theatrical atmosphere of many Eastern European conflicts — especially in Poland which has the strongest tradition of symbolic games in political life.

Lastly, *bricolage* reasoning is invulnerable to empirical verification. The stock of signs is not too flexible and is usually transformed by leaps and bounds in emotionally-laden situations. *Bricolage* tends to reduce the subject's active role because its cognitive categories result from collective rather than from individual experiences. Furthermore, as already indicated, this kind of irreflexive immersion in culture has important ideological implications.

In order to describe the symmetry between *bricolage* and Leninist ideology it is necessary to dwell on one of the latter characteristics. Besançon has described Leninism as "surrealist" because of its resistance to any challenges by real processes, its unrelenting presence in the world of institutions and, above all, because of its allegedly objective status, independent of human will. This last property can be best exemplified by juxtaposing it with another ideological phenomenon: how one branch of German expressionism attempted to legitimate the Nazi state with aesthetic principles and thus interpreted political phenomena by artistic standards, i.e., from a standpoint transcending these phenomena. The totalitarian state was regarded as the "transcendence of form" and the tool needed to "forge chaos into clear shapes." The "imperative of form" was represented as the only answer possible after Nietzsche to forestall axiological and ontological chaos, while state violence and hierarchy were regarded as instruments easing the crystallization of this aesthetic idea on an unprecedented, nationwide scale. There is, however, a subtle difference between the Leninist "surreality" and, e.g., Benn's "what exists" (*das Anschiende*).[16] They are both *a priori* constructs, but they have a different ontological

14. W. Narojek, *Social Structure in Individual Experience* (Warsaw, 1981), uses memoirs to document that a measure of one's social promotion is how they relate to those defined as members of the intelligentsia. According to Narojek, the main cause of tension for first generation white collar employees is the feeling that their advancement is not complete because they cannot fully acquire the mythologized status of the intelligentsia. This situation results in frustration even when the authors of the memoirs are aware of the intelligentsia's largely mythologized status.

15. See my "On Some Contradictions in Socialism," in *Soviet Studies* (April 1979).

16. Cf. Gottfried Benn, *Der Neue Staat und die Intellektuellen* (Berlin, 1933).

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status. Leninism makes claims to an objective existence, independent of human will and representing objective historical necessity, while Benn's aesthetic ideal is presented as the highest emanation of the human will, rather than as something transcending it. The latter can be traced back to Fichte, interpreted in the Nietzschean, relativistic and anti-Platonic spirit. In fact, the difference between these two types of reasoning stems from the difference between the Hegelian and the Fichtean attempts to resolve the antimony of Kant's apriorism.[17] And both lines of thought are alien to the tradition of Anglo-Saxon liberalism.

Two *a priori* assumptions seem to be crucial to Leninism: 1) There can be absolutely no "social principle" independent of the "state principle" since the vanguard (i.e., the party) represents by definition the interests of the working class regarded as the most progressive sector of society. This assumption is linked to Leninism's substitution of a theory of the communist party for a theory of socialism. 2) Nationalized property is absolutely predominant, since it is regarded as the "highest type" of property. This assumption is related to the definition of socialism as an absence of capitalism. By implication, the elimination of capitalist relations is seen as equivalent to the development of socialist relations.

The stability of these assumptions cannot be explained simply in terms of the interests of the groups in power. Also essential is the nature of the language and the peculiar perspective within which those assumptions are formulated, so that any changes are blocked at the level of structures of thought. It is impossible to express in that language the mechanisms of crises and the contradictions in "really existing socialism." This language immediately provides the means to defend its "surreality" against any challenges.

The main device protecting the assumptions of "surreality" is the arbitrary definition of what is regarded as a "whole," so that any relevant elements can be defined at will in or out of the system. In accordance with this and with the further assumption that only "non-antagonistic contradictions" can appear in the system as, at most, "inadequate embodiment" of the "ideal," any rebelling elements are defined away as "alien." In this perspective, it is thus out of the question for political opponents to be able to articulate the system's inherent contradictions. When mass revolt takes place (as in 1980-81 Poland) and it is too absurd to ascribe to it a "foreign" origin, another mechanism is available. Accordingly, the working class' "objective" consciousness need not be identical with its empirical expressions. Rather, it is possible to grasp its objective consciousness through *a priori* assumptions (supported by logical tricks such as the concept of the "dialectical majority" which, if "historically progressive," need not be the greater number). A vicious circle develops: the coherence of the surreality can be defended only by the belief in the "objective

17. It was no accident that Hegelianism, rather than Fichteanism, took root in Russia. This was due largely to the lack of a romantic tradition in that country, and Russia's characteristic anti-individualism: the lack of an awareness of the existential tragedy of life, due to the downplaying of the boundary between culture and nature transmitted through Orthodoxy.

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progressiveness" of the forms of social life which embody its assumptions. Therefore, ironically, those seeking changes are accused of "backwardness" or conservatism, regardless of their claims, while the power apparatus defending the status quo is by definition the force of progress and of revolution.

Systematic contradictions cannot be expressed in the language of surreality even if facts are fairly well recorded, because of the built-in rules of transition from empirical evidence to generalization. This is especially remarkable in the theorizing of radical critics of "really existing socialism" who work within the orthodox Marxist paradigm. On the level of facts their evaluations are essentially similar[18] to those of the so-called democratic opposition and of the underground *Solidarity* press. Differences begin to appear only on the level of generalizations. Orthodox critics of the system continue to operate within the magic circle of "surreality," They claim that, notwithstanding its negative character, the current phase of the history of the system is "necessary" and ultimately "progressive." Accordingly, socialism is an inevitable stage in the decline of capitalism and its pathologies are thus "normal" and "necessary." Only after this phase of decline will the demoralization of the working class by a more radical "dictatorship of the proletariat," with the Communist Party exerting political violence aimed mainly against a bureaucracy taking unwarranted advantage of this "historically justified" and thus generally progressive "decline." In official documents there is a striking tendency to define "what is" in terms of "what is not," i.e., by reference to outright idealistic arguments about the "imperfect embodiment of the Ideal" as the main cause of crisis.[19] Also typical of this perspective is the decomposition of the unified social process into good and evil, respectively identified with the party and the "foreign" elements.

Those rebelling against the apparatus and its version of "surreality" also tend to reason in dualistic terms of good and evil. They also talk about the Ideal (which may or may not be "embodied") opposed to the real. The contents (and not necessarily all of them) of the Party's "surreality" are rejected, but the structure of reasoning with its schizoid double vision remains. Ironically, the mid-1950s intellectual revolution by some of those who has been active a few years earlier in setting up the ideological surreality and its institutional embodiments was strongly anti-dogmatic and relativist. On the other hand, the early 1980s revolt by that generation which had never really been indoctrinated by orthodox Marxism was marked by a strong tendency to build its own version of dogmatism and its own utopia. This generation unconsciously reproduced the same form of reasoning of the Party apparatus when rebelling against it. This was caused by a particular epistemological situation which develops within "really existing socialism" and encourages *a*

18. See, e.g., the description of the Polish crisis in the weekly *Sprawy i Ludzie* — especially Ladesz's articles in Autumn 1983.

19. Cf. the "Report of Kubiak's Commission," in the special issue of *Nowe Drogi*, September 1983.

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*priori* reasoning and a dualistic outlook. The rebels of the mid-50s were able to reject this form of reasoning because their using it in the past was a result of a conscious decision and their semantic competences facilitated a return to their professional roles. Thus, their revolt was largely a struggle for integrity of thought and they had enough intellectual tools to win it. Yet they remained politically impotent because they rejected surreality was the only *political* language they were able to use. On the other hand, the revolt of the 80s was a search for ways of transforming the system and, ironically enough, this is what made the rebels so similar to their opponents. As discussed elsewhere,[20] only a new utopia can promote change in a system such as "really existing socialism," where transformative economic interests cannot arise because of the predominant type of property rights, as opposed to, e.g., the situation before the bourgeois revolution where capitalism was already present within feudal social structures.

There is yet another trait of the perspective of the defenders of official surreality which makes them similar to their opponents. The reasoning of both sides is mediated by values and cultural signs. When the situation requires a definition, it is not analyzed in terms of its own dynamics but in terms of *a priori* arguments provided, in the case of the apparatus, by official ideology, or, in the case of the fundmentalist wing of *Solidarity*, in terms of moral standards. Similarly, the self-images of both sides are not rooted in actual interactions. The apparatus has its myth of the vanguard, while *Solidarity* had its mission of political moralism. Such symbolic mediation results in a bipolar definition of the situation and of one's own position in it, regardless of real processes. In fact, symbols were preselected because of their contrasting quality. This becomes even more distinct when people using *bricolage* reasoning learn to operate on a new, higher level of generality. Cognitive radicalism is the main outcome of such a situation. It also tends to be enhanced by the specific character of the mass revolt. This experience involves a status competition, a struggle against hierarchy symbols and, above all, a moral feeling which was at the same time a cognitive experience. The political process could be lived through in this manner only because of the availability of a stock of relatively stable and strongly contrasted signs, invulnerable to current verification.

All these phenomena, however, have led to a situation in which verbal polarization, expressing above all the relations between the surrealities of both sides, was associated with complex, overlapping interactions failing to be brought out, because they did not fit cognitive clichés, but were felt as relevant on a day-to-day basis. In other words, the actual areas of conflict and cooperation did not fit their images. It is this paradox which determined the warped dynamics of revolt and "normalization" in Poland after December 13, 1981. Conflicts in day-to-day interactions and in opinions concerning

20. Cf. Staniszkis, "Property . . . ," *op. cit.* There are quite a few utopias circulating now in Poland, ranging from the evangelical socialism of John Paul II, through different variants of anarchism, escape from the system (quasi-religious movements), the new version of the totalitarian utopia, to peculiar "anti-utopias" (including the search for a change in the system of property, with an awareness of its high social costs).

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concrete problems tended to decrease (i.e., the power elite was becoming increasingly isolated), while at the same time both sides' depiction of the conflict (which provided a symbolic representation of the situation in terms of each side's surreality) suggested that the conflict was intensifying. Thus a symbolic polarization was associated with a remarkable actual depolarization.[21] That is why, among other things, martial law came as such a surprise. The "confrontation" had actually been more a symbolic than a real phenomenon.

This rift between image and reality stemming from the forms of reasoning was one of the most remarkable political facts of the Fall of 1981. Thus, in "really existing socialism" not only is surreality reproduced within the power apparatus, but also by society in revolt. These two structures fight about contents (because they rely on a different stock of signs), but they are both aprioristic and so reinforce each other, thus sustaining the dualism of thought typical of Leninist regimes. In fact, surreality survives not only because it is invulnerable to empirical challenges but also because it has created an epistemological situation that reproduces the very same form of reasoning even in its opponents. As already indicated, a society facing the state can define its own identity more easily if it has its own surreality with symbols not linked directly to social realities. The reliance on its own surreality is even more remarkable, and sometimes even hysterical, if the "social principle" is actually weakened. The violent defense of surreality is an attempt to defend society's identity against the state in everyday life.

In 1983-84 it was noted that, on some issues, the old propaganda clichés were being reintroduced to facilitate the articulation of group interests and identities.[22] During the 1980-81 revolt, moral symbols and values did appear. The defeat of *Solidarity*, however, brought about a collapse in self-evaluation, since the rebelling group could not live up to the self-imposed moral standards under pressure. The most fundamentalist groups even felt they no longer had the right to apply moral judgements.[23] Cognitive chaos returned[24] and the

21. This conclusion is also supported by L. Dorn, "Polling the Poles" in *Public Opinion* (August-September 1981). This is a survey carried out by the sociological center of the Mazowsze (Warsaw) branch of *Solidarity*.

22. See P. Kuczynski, "Propaganda pomaga mowieniu" ("Propaganda helps to Talk") typescript (1984).

23. This is confirmed by my own experiences with miners in 1983-84. They believed that they had failed to live up to their own moral standards and thus no longer had the right to use a moral language. The phenomenon of two visions of the conflict, each with its own dynamics, can be accounted for by the erosion of moral categories or, rather by the inability to use them. The difference in dynamics is probably brought about by the terms used to identify and describe the conflict situations. There were two kinds of answers to the question "What do you believe was the intensity of hostile feelings and conflicts in your enterprise during three periods: up to December 1981, in '82 and in '83?" Those who described the conflict as "strong," used this qualification dramatically less often for later than for earlier periods. The decrease seems to be much greater than the actual reduction of conflict: 27.5% of responding workers described the conflict as strong until December '81: 16.5% in '82 and 3% in '83. Apparently, those who believed in the constant intensification of the conflict based themselves on actual interactions, while those who saw the conflict as "strong," based themselves on an *a priori* symbolic vision of the situation. As these *a priori* categories wore out, the interpretation of the conflict became increasingly foggy.

24. The previously-quoted study indicates that a high level of frustration is associated with

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consequence was either silence or the acceptance of the surreality of the apparatus.

This symmetry in the forms of reasoning is not the only symptom of the paradoxical similarity between the conflicting sides. Other symptoms are: 1) The largely convergent images of what a "good system" is. The rebelling groups often pointed to ideological images which included such items as egalitarianism, morality, substantial rather than procedural forms of justice — all features belonging to the frame of reference of the power apparatus. 2) The phenomenon of an "adaptational superstructure." It has been shown[25] that the general values of socialism are in principle accepted, the regime's organizational rules (e.g., "the leading role of the communist party") are questioned, while the practical implementation of these rules is evaluated much less critically because of the mechanism of secondary reinforcement (e.g., as when a party channel is used to obtain for the company certain resources which are in short supply). This is an example of the growing acceptance of the system on the everyday level, despite its rejection on the symbolic level. Through such mechanisms the regime's institutional arrangements develop interests promoting their survival. 3) Those challenging the authoritarian regime are often themselves authoritarian in outlook.[26] Their concept of democracy tends to be "majority rule," without any emphasis on the necessity to guarantee minority rights or individual freedoms — especially for those holding differing opinions. This makes the logic of revolt quite complex. One of the reasons why the authoritarian system is rejected may be simply that people do not find in it authority for themselves, rather than because of the regime's authoritarian structure.[27] An associated phenomenon is the remarkable lack of coherence in outlooks (the image of a good system includes both economic etatism as well as "majority rule") and the lack of readiness to pay for the eventual transformation of the system towards a greater degree of economic rationality.[28]

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difficulty in defining the concrete lines of conflict. 72% of the interviewed workers declared that there was a social conflict in Poland and some of them were able to articulate what it was (25% mentioned the material level of life, 13.5% power, 8.1% the struggle against privileges, 6.8% human rights) but only a few were able to identify who was on either side of the conflict.

25. This is confirmed by the studies of Rychard, *op. cit.*, and K. Nowak, Institute of Sociology (Warsaw University, 1984) in which interviewed workers reacted negatively to the word "socialism" (69% of the answers to the question "Would you like the world to follow the path of socialism?" were negative) but they did not reject the specific characteristics of socialism in response to more analytical questions (type of property, the welfare state with an energetic redistribution by State).

26. Cf. W. Surazaw (Wroclaw Politechnik, 1981) and Kanolewicz-Zebik (PAN, 1984), mimeo, show the high level of authoritarian attitudes among workers. The authoritarian syndrome includes: a substantive and not a procedural conception of justice, little tolerance for differences of opinion in one's own group, approval of forced labor for "social parasites," less trust in democratically elected activists than in authoritarian, charismatic leaders.

27. According to Nowak, *op. cit.*, the highest authority among workers is enjoyed by the Pope (97%), Walesa (24%), Jaruzelski (19%), and Glemp (14%).

28. In her study of the level of consumption in Poland, L. Beskid (PAN, 1983) indicates that deprivation is measured by one's own lost consumption rather than in relation to the depth of the crisis. Thus, a readiness for more sacrifices can hardly be expected.

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Therefore, even a violent revolt need not indicate desire for a real transformation. On the contrary, it may even be conducive to the revival of the system. This can be done, e.g., by a redistribution which tends to reproduce the system since it eases tensions, or by the contamination of society with aprioristic structures of thought, or finally by the mechanism, described by Hegel, of the revitalization of the power hierarchy by the act of breaking the revolt. Thinking in terms of surreality involves an antimony in the Hegelian sense. Thought proceeds on two levels: on the level of everyday experience, and on the level of "surreality" based on *a priori* assumptions in thought. And between these two levels there are no mechanisms of mediation. They exist independently of one another and often in conflict, while both are accepted and defended. On the other hand, a fully rational perception (without the mediation of surreality) of actual events might preempt any revolt. In fact, the system seems to be susceptible to change, if at all, only by reliance on utopian or "surreal" images. Thus, the irrational perception of one's own situation may be sometimes rational from the perspective of systemic change.

Such utopian thought, however, must from the outset be aware of the danger that it may generate a new surreality. It must evolve some mechanisms for the shaping of a genuine and independent "social principle" in the vision of the future system, thus minimizing the amount of artifacts created by the state.

Party ideologies in Poland seem to be aware of the importance of surreality, including myths, as instruments in oppositional activities. Thus, e.g., Ladosz, a party official, in his lecture on the oppositional intelligentsia made no reference to typical ideological arguments, but rather encouraged the Polish educated class to make its self-perception more rational and thus to fit its self-definition to its actual social status.[29] He urged the intelligentsia to take account of its internal differences, of the overlap of its interests with those of the power apparatus, of its provincialism and of the Stalinist past of some of its most radical speakers. According to Ladosz, such a rationalization of its self-image would dispose of the myth of the mission of the intelligentsia and of the special pretense of the educated class to pass moral judgements. Ladosz was probably aware that such realistic thinking would amount to this group's political suicide. He probably also remembered the experience of the late 1940s in Eastern Europe, when certain small but culturally active groups of young intellectuals adopted Marxism, thus accepting an ambiguous social status (according to the theory). The Marxist vision of intellectuals as a social group without an identity and servile to any power made a whole generation of educated people sympathetic to communism ashamed of their origin or status. With this self-fulfilling prophecy, they checkmated their own social activity as makers of culture, thereby obliterating any integrity they still had.

29. Jarosław Ladosz, "Lecture on the Intelligentsia," (WSNS — High School for Social Sciences, associated to Central Committee of PUWP) (October 1983).

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In "really existing socialism" people live in a world of artifacts. This is why cultural references seem essential in a way difficult to understand for those living in the West. To get around socially, one must regard the *a priori* assumptions of the surreality underlying these artifacts as objectively given. To define one's own identity among missing or misleading landmarks, one has to rely on cultural signs which may be apparently irrelevant to the situation. Such *a priori* assumptions and cultural signs are much more intensely present than even the most fanatically experienced ideologies in the West. This adds to surreality's irresponsiveness in both versions to lived experience.

The described features of thinking in "really existing socialism" are remarkably close to some phenomena of social consciousness analyzed by Berdiaev and Dostoevsky. It is also striking that the social system they described, i.e., Russia in the second half of the 19th century, was also marked, although for different reasons, by the active presence of the state in production relations, while civil society remained underdeveloped. The three mechanisms they used to characterize social consciousness seem to be especially close to the previously-described dualism and apriorism of "surreality."

The first one was identified by Berdiaev as the *double ideologization of thought* by the Russian intelligentsia of his time. On the one hand, scholarly endeavors were subject to ideologization, especially in philosophy and in social research. They were not evaluated in terms of truth or falsehood, but according to their utility for the definition of one's own and the opponents' identity. In other words, scholarly theories were treated as signs: their contents were less important. On the other hand, reasoning concerning social practice was also subject to ideologization. These problems, however, were often formulated in terms of abstract categories often borrowed from a different context (Western Europe) and thus not grounded in Russian reality. Analyzing the effects of this double ideologization, Berdiaev pointed to the inevitable a priorism of thought, its stiffness and its helplessness in facing both practical and theoretical dilemmas.

Dostoevsky was concerned with the peculiar intellectual dynamics resulting when thinking borrows from a different social reality and thus fails to correspond to life. Dostoevsky analyzed two remakably relevant processes. First, he dealt with the Tolstoyan character Levin. In Tolstoy's novel, Levin analyzed social relations on a Russian rural estate where peasants were tied to the land and there was a communal system of redistribution along capitalist lines. Dostoevsky showed that formulating problems in foreign terms must ultimately end up in the reliance of thought on moral intuition as its standard. Second, Dostoevsky analyzed the paradoxical situation when the system's radical opponents are also admirers of its most fundamental features. This happens when one's society is criticized in terms of utopias formulated elsewhere. All critical utopias reject the system within which they have been formulated. This must lead to a positive evaluation of a society which, like Russia, was itself the opposite of what Western utopias criticized. This mechanism can be seen at work in the apparently surprising closeness of Russian Marxism and

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Narodnick ideology. We have here a radical criticism of the czarist autocracy and, at the same time, a rejection of a capitalism which is the opposite of czarist rule. Consequently, phenomena which provided social support for autocracy were glorified. There were the rural communes which used to multiply the redistributive and control functions of the state, and the absence of an impersonal and individualistic market which reinforced the role of the state in productive relations.

These mechanisms have not been irrelevant for the 1917 Russian revolution and what followed. Thus, the Leninist ambiguity concerning what it meant to build socialism in Russia was rooted in the previously-described intellectual chaos. Moreover, the consequences of these patterns of thought can be seen today, in the form of political fundamentalism, thinking in terms of surreality, and finally in the warped "inert structure" within which the radical rejection of the system's symbolic dimension coexists with the surprising similarities between the ideas of the system's supporters and opponents.

The reality shaped by Leninist ideology and practice has generated as its complement a peculiar structure of reasoning on the level of everyday thinking. With its a priorism and dualism, this structure is similar to the official ideology. Indeed, it itself has an ideological function and significantly determines some political processes. In particular, as *Solidarity*'s case shows, 1) It leads to a mode of protest articulation built on categories not rooted in actual social realities. This protest, striking at the phantoms of the enemy and moving around in society using its own phantoms as signposts, becomes increasingly ritualized and isolated from real processes as it enjoys its symbolic victories. 2) It imposes remarkable limits on the ability to learn in conflict situations. 3) In its struggle against opponents' attitudes it fixes them, for it cannot either become aware of or reinforce any eventual changes in their behavior. 4) This is a symptom of the progressive sovietization of Polish society. The fact that sovietization is felt in the form and not in the contents of reasoning and that it becomes visible in the course of the struggle against the regime, only tends to appease social vigilance and add to the myth of how easy it will be to transform the system.

One of the conclusions of the 1980-1981 Polish experience is that the Orwellian vision of a system of reversed meaning and of pretended normality in an abnormal world — which so adequately expressed the essence of the totalitarian phase of "really existing socialism" — must be reformulated to fit its new authoritarian-bureaucratic phase. The trap of the previously-described symmetry of the forms of reasoning (even though the revolt succeeded in restoring the original meanings at least to some words) actually indicates a new dimension of enslavement. The approach required to face it is the exact opposite of what Orwell thought, i.e., it should "seek out abnormalities" in order to see in a new light what has already come to pass as quite normal. The act of "estrangement" which enlightens and refreshes perceptions is necessary to define one's own identity in the vague and ambiguous situation of the "indifferent variety." This may take the form of a genuine, emotionally-

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involving moral experience allowing a new look at social relations. However, this can also become ritualized and thus consist of playing the game of seeking abnormalities. Such ritual is not only an attempt to remember and fix an experience which has already lost its novelty, but also involves an effort to preserve those symbolic identities acquired at the moment of revolt and continually eroded by actual social interactions in a society in which the state and its institutions are ubiquitous.

The triviality of evil in the system of repressive tolerance and, at the same time, the growing ambiguity of the moral standards which were so sharp during the formal existence of *Solidarity*, tend to bring back the situation of the 1970s with its deep frustration which could not be articulated. This is why political life in Poland today is so strikingly theatrical and ritualized. It reflects the search for these forms.

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# MAX HORKHEIMER AND THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF GERMAN IDEALISM

by Herbert Schnädelbach*

Horkheimer's work contains many passages concerning moral and morally relevant problems, but one searches in vain for a completely elaborated moral philosophy. The rudiments thereof may be found primarily in "Materialism and Ethics" (1933) and in various passages of the "Juliette" portion of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. These would be quickly summarized, but could not thereby be adequately elucidated. If the matter were to remain with the mere reproduction of these thoughts, one would have to reach the regrettable conclusion — given the paucity of texts — that early critical theory had an ethics deficit. The attempt to read Horkheimer in such a way that the relevant passages open one's vision to an implicit moral philosophy — that is, one amenable to reconstruction — must rely upon other approaches. For my own part, I choose the method of contrast: with the ethics of German idealism. In this connection, the concept of "German Idealism" is construed broadly so as not to preclude from the very outset the possibility that it may also encompass contemporary communicative or discursive ethics, since after all the latter understands itself as a transformation at least of Kant's ethics. This need not be a bad thing, for "idealism" is by no means a dirty word. To be idealistic only becomes an objection to an ethics if a materialistic ethical scheme proves itself superior or more productive. This, however, is precisely Horkheimer's thesis, and if he is correct, this would have momentous significance for the current discussion of ethics. In this sense, the engagement with Horkheimer is of more than mere antiquarian interest, dictated by the occasion.

Already at this point, a crucial difference becomes visible between the great idealistic systems and critical theory. With Kant and Fichte, the philosophy of morality (Moral) — whether as program of the critical grounding of norms or as a theory of virtue or ethics — is an important element of the system of philosophy as a whole, if not indeed the most important, given the primacy of practial reason. While Hegel deprecates morality in favor of the concrete ethical life, it retains a system-constitutive position in both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right*. In the older theory, at least, there is no such corresponding role to be found; ethics and morality were for it comparatively subordinate phenomena, which certainly deserved theoretical attention (it is well known that Adorno had still wanted to compose an ethics), but which did not belong to the foundations of it own theoretical self-understanding. There are

*Translated by John Torpey



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at least two reasons for this. First, because materialism, the content of which Horkheimer had intended the critical theory of society to be,[1] does not admit of a division into theoretical and practical philosophy. If "materialist theory [is] an aspect of the efforts to improve human conditions,"[2] then practical philosophy has become total therein, for even the most sublime theory construction is undertaken with "practical intent"[3]; the omnipresence of the practical intent in the theory leaves no room for a separate theory of praxis specializing in moral problems. The other reason for the relative irrelevance of ethics in critical theory is that it sought to counter the tendency of academic Neo-Kantianism to reduce all of practical philosophy to a normative ethics and to forfeit the themes of "society" and "state" in favor of the social sciences by way of transferring the traditional objects of practical philosophy into a comprehensive, interdisciplinarily conceived theory of society, whereby of course its philosophical character had still to be respected. In this materialist "unification of philosophy and science,"[4] ethics and morality themselves become objects of social theory, although it becomes difficult to specify what is still supposed to be philosophical about them aside from the fact that they always traditionally had been investigated by philosophers.

Much of what Horkheimer has to say about "morality" belongs, to put it loosely, to the sociology of morality, in respect of which the social-historical thesis is paramount that *morality*, as an independent regulator of action effective within individuals, first emerges in the course of the development of bourgeois society and likewise will decline with that society.[5] Moreover, Horkheimer makes the case plausible that the *moral problem*, as it has been formulated and discussed in bourgeois philosophy, is decipherable as a social problem: namely, as that of the medition between the general and the particular at the level of individual action, but which remains inscrutable in the context of the bourgeois order and therefore produces in the individual's consciousness an "endless reflection and continuous turmoil,"[6] which fundamentally cannot be overcome. *Morality* — understood as the mark of bourgeois conciousness — therefore has an aporetic structure. From this perspective it becomes clear why Horkheimer's critical theory placed so little value on being considered applied moral philosophy. To accord a constitutive significance to morality would amount to making the problem which one wishes to solve the very foundation of the solution to that problem. If one thematizes morality

1. Cf. Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* trans. Matthew O'Connell and others (New York: Seabury Press, 1972) p. 24. [Here as in other cases, I have occasionally preferred my own rendering to that of the translation cited. — Trans.]

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 26 ff.

3. On the relationship between theory construction and practical interest, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 162 ff.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

5. Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie: Eine Dokumentation*, Alfred Schmidt, ed., Vol. I, pp. 71 ff. [The essay cited here is "Materialismus und Moral," which first appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* II (1933) pp. 162-197.] Cf. also "Egoism and the Freedom Movement," *Telos* No. 54 (Winter 82-83) pp. 14 ff. and pp. 48 ff.

6. *Kritische Theorie* Vol. I, p. 75; cf. also pp. 74 ff.

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and its problems from the standpoint of its historical contingency, indeed its practical surmountability in a future human society which no longer requires morality,[7] one would not wish to base the theory which understands itself as an element of precisely this project of transcendence on that which is to be transcended. Admittedly, Horkheimer here follows the image of sublation via realization, with which the young Marx associated the whole of philosophy. In this respect, Horkheimer's theory of morality necessarily remains circumscribed within the still-existing, and the observation that his theory itself obviously contained features of bourgeois morality he would not have counted a valid objection. Nonetheless, as a critical theory of morality which, as a preliminary to realization via sublation also and, so to speak, against its will must remain moral philosophy, this theory cannot develop such an affirmative relation to morality that it could make the latter into its own foundation and then — as occurred in Neo-Kantian ethical socialism — into the foundation of social criticism in general.

Is Horkheimer simply a moral philosopher *malgré lui*? "Morality is by no means dismissed by materialism as mere ideology in the sense of false consciousness. It is rather a human phenomenon which is hardly to be overcome for the duration of the bourgeois period."[8] From that perspective one could conclude that moral philosophy only persists "because the moment to realize it was missed,"[9] but even this would reveal nothing of the truth content of its object. Even if it were really possible to conceive of a society which no longer needed morality — and Kant had already anticipated precisely this, according to Horkheimer[10] — it in no way follows that one could prove from this utopian standpoint that morality had been mere ideology. That aspect of morality which is to be retained in the sublation via realization simply cannot be false. Horkheimer always vigorously rejected ideological reductionism. That which Horkheimer had to say beyond the social history and the critique of ideology about the truth content or the validity of morality is the content of his moral *philosophy*. It remains *moral* philosophy because he persistently refused to go the way of many Marxists from ethics to the metaphysics of history. The young Marx before him has understood communism not as a mere "ideal," but rather as "a real movement, which transcends the current condition."[11] Lenin, Kautsky, and others made out of this notion an objectivistic teleology of history which made normative questions appear not just superficial, but indeed as signs of subjectivistic backsliding. Horkheimer knew that social theory and the philosophy of history alone were incapable of answering the Kantian question regarding what we should do. Furthermore, such theories themselves are never normatively presuppositionless,[12] and this means that even

7. Cf. *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 82 ff.; "Egoism and the Freedom Movement," p. 56.
8. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 79.
9. T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973) p. 3.
10. Cf. *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 82 ff.
11. Karl Marx, *Deutsche Ideologie*, in S. Landshut, ed., *Die Frühschriften* (Stuttgart 1953) p. 361.
12. Cf. footnote 3.

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critical theory, which according to Horkheimer was best capable of guiding rational action, was determined by an interest which it itself cannot ground completely: an "interest in the elimination of social injustices."[3] Even if Horkheimer had steadfastly striven against characterizing this interest as merely moral — he always understood by "morality" primarily individual or private morality — the impulses which constitute and stimulate the program of a critical theory belong to that which must be more closely examined in the reconstruction of his moral philosophy.

Ethics as a philosophical discipline is distinguished from the sociology of morality not by its object, but by its questions, which traditionally concern its conceptual and normative foundations. But today one can more competently investigate the conceptual structure and grounds of factual validity of a given moral teaching as a social scientist than as a philosopher, for a great deal of empirical knowledge is necessary for the task. The matter is different if we switch from the perspective of the third person to that of the first and inquire after the meaning and grounds of validity of our *own* action orientations no longer as observers, but rather as participants. It is impossible to separate the two perspectives in Horkheimer's thought, for when he speaks of bourgeois morality, he hardly does so as if he were a travelling ethnologist discussing the Hopis; with mere critique even critical theory cannot transcend the bounds of the bourgeois world to which it itself belongs.[14] The social history and critique of the ideology of morality therefore always relies in this respect on the fundamental normative conceptions to which critical theory is committed despite its genetic and diagnostic findings. The perspectives of first and third person can be analytically *distinguished*, however, and such a move is methodologically necessary if one wishes to discuss Horkheimer as a philosopher of morality.

## II

The moral philosophy of German idealism is the contrasting background before which the outlines of Horkheimer's moral philosophy emerge particularly clearly; he considered it the paradigm of all idealistic moral philosophy.[15] Another entire study would be necessary to elucidate in detail the way in which Horkheimer draws on Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. Kant is ubiquitous in his thought, but the presence of Hegel in his ethical reflections cannot be underestimated. Above all, the view of morality from the perspective of the philosophy of history and of social theory as a phenomenon, and the mistrust toward a pure Ought, are Hegelian legacies. In the following I would like to discuss the moral philosophy of German idealism only in typifying simplification, which leaves open the possibility of taking into consideration newer approaches to ethics as well.

13. *Critical Theory*, p. 242. In the original version of "Traditionelle und Kritische Theorie," the passage reads: "interest in the abolition of class domination." Cf. *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* VI (1937) p. 292. On the relationship between theory and interest, cf. also *Critical Theory*, pp. 213 ff. and *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 91.

14. Cf. T.W. Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *Prisms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967) pp. 17-34.

15. For Horkheimer's characterization of idealist moral philosophy, cf. *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 72 ff.

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At least according to Kant and Fichte, morality is the very essence of generally valid and rationally justifiable precepts of action of a categorical "ought" character; their ethics are *deontological*, *universal*, and *rational*.[16] It is taken as absolute that "the moral" is the "ought-to" in the sense of that to which not just anyone, but to which indeed the philosopher himself is obligated.[17] The ethics of German idealism is also deontological in the more specific sense that it is only prepared to understand "the moral" as the *unconditionally* obligating; everything else is mere pragmatic rules. The universalist element of this ethics consists in the fact that it considers a categorical Ought possible only in commandments which appeal to *all* men, indeed to all rational beings of any kind. In this regard, unconditional imperatives with individual persons as addressees would be perfectly conceivable, as for instance if pronounced by an omnipotent God in whom the person believes. The *rational* motif in the ethics of Kant and Fichte is inseparable from the universal one because they are convinced that categorically compelling moral principles can only be justified as rational in so far as they are also universal, and the structure of the Categorical Imperative in the relation of maxims and general law explicitly expresses this. Yet, the Universal and the Rational are not simply the same; feelings and motives that are not further justifiable may also be universal, and at the latest since Schopenhauer, it is precisely the Rational which stands under suspicion of being the merely particular. Furthermore, one must draw distinctions within the concept of the Rational itself. The ethics of German idealism is rationalist because it understands the Moral to be simultaneously that which is rationally justifiable *and* which itself is the Rational. The two should relate to each other in such a way that the rationally justifiable immediately attains the attribute of being rational itself by virtue of its mode of justification. This leap from adverb to adjective underlies all procedural justifications of ethics including discursive ethics, but it is not plausible in the least: there may be quite rational grounds for being irrational on occasion and, alternatively, the arguments for heeding our reason and not our "instincts" (or at least that which we take them to be) may in certain cases appear exhausted. In general, the notion that we can only *rationally* perceive that which we can perceive *as rational* is a rationalist myth which culminates in Hegel's philosophy. As a late descendant of the principle that the same can only be known by the same and thus as its equal, this notion expands here into a philosophy of absolute reason which teaches (above all, for the sake of its

16. These characteristics also accurately describe Hegel's conception of morality (Moralität), although he defines it only as an element of the concrete ethical life. On the application of these definitions to discursive ethics, cf. Section V below.

17. Once Fichte and Hegel interpreted this Ought as "mere" Ought, that is, as an indicator of the finitude of the subject, an ambiguity was introduced into the matter which has tremendously burdened the ethics discussion until the present day, especially with Hegelians. Only from a teleological standpoint, which is not the Kantian, can the Ought-to as that which obligates us, be equated with the "mere" Ought-to, that is, the still unreal, the not yet realized. On this, cf. Odo Marquand, "Hegel und das Sollen," in his *Schwierigkeiten mit der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt, 1973) pp. 37ff. Both Hegel's critique of the "mere" Ought and Schopenhauer's rejection of deontological ethics as a whole play an important role in Horkheimer's ethical reflections.

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own possibility) that reason rules the world, and that world history will look rationally upon him who looks rationally upon the world.[18] The Post-Hegelian defeatism in regard to matters of reason stands completely under the spell of this principle; still with Adorno it leads to the suspicion that philosophy as a whole, because it is that which relies upon reason, is a "gigantic tautology" which can discover nothing but itself in its object.[19] Only when one is prepared to distinguish between *metaphysical* and *methodical* rationalism will the experience of irrationality in the world alone no longer cause one to doubt the possibility of rational philosophy.[20] In ethics, boundless rationalism leads to the conception that rational moral demands are demands of reason itself, just as if commandments, which we can in rational fashion perceive as moral, were rational in the sense that they had had their origin in reason, that in them reason gained its voice, that indeed in them reason itself became practical.[21]

Schopenhauer rebelled against this rationalism in ethics, and Horkheimer followed his lead without therefore becoming an irrationalist. As far as the deontological character of ethics is concerned, Schopenhauer is not prepared to recognize any "other origin for the introduction of the conepts of law, precept, and Ought into ethics . . . but one alien to philosophy, the Mosaic Decalogue." The concept of duty itself, "together with its relations — that is those of law, commandment, Ought and the like — has its origin, when taken in this unconditional sense, in theological morality, and remains an outsider in philosophical morality until it adduces a definitive accreditation from the essence of human nature or from that of the natural world."[22] Horkheimer adapts this thought in a materialist fashion. His counterargument is not that an unconditional Ought must always have theological roots, but rather that the justification of such an Ought requires recourse to an absolute (divine or human) consciousness,[23] and that this course is closed off to Horkheimer the materialist by definition. For him as social theorist, "obligations . . . point back toward commandments and contracts,"[24] and he adds to this the remark deriving from Nietzsche and Freud that the consciousness of duty, moral constraint, and unconditional Ought has a very profane origin in the internalization of social compulsion,[25] and for this reason alone cannot be viewed as a divine voice or the voice of reason. For Horkheimer, categorical imperatives belong to the arsenal of idealist moral theories every bit as much as eternal values. Hypothetical imperatives, by contrast, are not capable of making

18. Cf. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* 5th Ed. (Hamburg 1955) p. 31.

19. Cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Dialektik als Vernunftkritik: Zur Rekonstruktion des Rationalen bei Adorno," in von Friedeburg and Habermas, eds., *Adorno-Konferenz 1983* (Frankfurt 1983) pp. 66ff.

20. On this point, cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Uber Irrationalitat und Irrationalismus," in Hans Peter Duerr, eds., *Der Wissenschaftler und das Irrationale* Vol. II (Frankfurt 1981) pp. 155 ff.

21. Cf. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* Introduction, A pp. 29ff.

22. Schopenhauer, *Über die Grundlage der Moral*, Section 4, in *Werke in zehn Bänden* (Zürcher Edition) Vol. VI pp. 161 ff.

23. Cf. *Critical Theory* pp. 18 and 21.

24. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 105.

25. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

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ethics into something deontic, for pragmatic rules have nothing specifically moral about them for either Schopenhauer or Horkheimer. Schopenhauer sees in pragmatic ethics only a "clever, methodical, far-sighted egoism" at work,[26] while Horkheimer traces them back to "harmonistic illusions," for morality and prudence necessaily diverge in the world as it is.[27]

Horkheimer says tersely: "Binding moral commandments do not exist."[28] But morality exists; as a historical-social and moral consciousness. Morality is a psychic phenomenon, which the materialist has first to describe and explain. Horkheimer also relies closely on Schopenhauer in the phenomenology of morality, and this reliance brings him to reject the *universalistic* claims of ethics. The Moral is not the unconditionally "ought-to" because such a thing does not exist, and the conditionally "ought to" is not specifically moral. Therewith falls away the logical or systematic compulsion to seek a justification of the moral Ought in the theory of the moral which after the end of theology could only be found in an agency which obligates every human being as such; that is, if ethics rids itself of deontology, it can simultaneously rid itself of universalism. Morality is not a general human phenomenon, but a historical one, and with this observation Horkheimer shifts even Schopenhauer's non-deontic ethics of the denial of the will to live out of the universalist perspective and into an historical one. If the history of morality is vitally linked to the emergence of bourgeois individuality, its *content* is vitally linked to the individual. As such, the Moral itself is something individual. Horkheimer cannot be intimidated with the objection of relativism, which rears its head almost automatically at this point; he insists that the specifically Moral lies precisely in that which can *not* be generally expected, demanded, or compelled, and contrariwise he points to the extra-moral origin of that which is universalist in bourgeois morality. For him, morality is neither deontic nor ontic in general, because metaphysics — according to which the General was also the Good — ended with Schopenhauer.[29] One could almost identify critical theory as a whole with the conviction that the General and the Powerful *cannot* be good because it is general and powerful; in other words, the Good in this world is to be sought in the ephemeral, the weak, in the individual impulse, in the exception, indeed in the improbable — in the unexpected and actually unwise goodness of individual motives and actions. The traditional theory of morality is itself traditional and not critical theory.[30] Horkheimer does not thereby deny that bourgeois morality contains the principles of freedom, equality, and justice essentially as general principles; but he recognizes at the same time that they are not primarily moral but *political* principles. That is to say, these principles could only appear as specifically moral principles and then also as the founda-

26. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Vol. 1, Appendix: "Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie," in *Werke* Vol. II, p. 639.

27. Cf. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 93.

28. *Ibid.*; on the following, cf. pp. 91 ff.

29. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Die Aktualität Schopenhauers," in *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (Frankfurt 1967) pp. 256 ff. [In English, "Schopenhauer Today," in Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1974) pp. 63-84).]

30. Cf. Carl-Friedrich Geyer, *Kritische Theorie: Max Horkheimer und Theodor W. Adorno* (Freiburg and Munich, 1982) p. 131.

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tion of politics after their transposition into a bourgeois-moral context.[31] Despite his rejection of a deontic-universalist ethics, Horkheimer can adhere with this argument to the universalist import of the demands for freedom, equality, and justice, which admittedly he can no longer justify immanently. Of course, the motives for raising these demands as general and universal today are themselves ethical, according to Horkheimer, in the sense of the not-generally-expected and obtainable Good.[32] They do not simply follow "logically" from their universalistic import.

With this expulsion of the universalist aspect of bourgeois morality to the political sphere and of the ethical aspect to the individual, the Kantian link of morality to *rationality* is broken. For Horkheimer, too, reason is the universal, but the Moral is not; that is, morality can be neither grounded in reason alone nor can it be rationally justifiable in the sense of a generally valid justification. The very limits of justifiability itself arise for Horkheimer the materialist from the insight that closed-off, absolute justifications are an "idealistic delusion."[33] Not just the notion of absolute demands is incompatible with materialist thought, but also the assumption of any kind of facticity from which they could derive and to which they would ultimately have to trace their justification[34]: whether it be God, Being, an absolute consciousness, matter, or 'history.' Accordingly, Horkheimer says of morality: "It does not admit of a justification — either by the intuition or by way of arguments."[35] According to Horkheimer, morality cannot "be proven," and "not one single value admit of a purely theoretical justification."[36] He adds an ethical mistrust to his metaphysical mistrust toward theoretical ethical justifications: the suspicion or the fear that the Moral could *lose* its ethical character precisely through its rationalization via rational justification. Schopenhauer had already wanted to unmask the Kantian postulation of the way in which individualistic maxims masquerade as general laws and, if one could then still want them ("und ob man sie dann selbst noch wollen könne"), as sublime pragmatic calculations and thus as pseudo ethical facade on an egoistic background. Horkheimer sharpens this argument by detecting in the rationalization of the Moral the workings of the rationality of mere self-preservation. For Horkheimer, *pure* reason in ethics is the *instrumental* reason in *pure* culture: this is detailed in the "Juliette" chapter of the *Dialetic of Enlightenment*. "Self-preservation is the constitutive principle of science, the soul of the table of categories, even if it has been idealistically deduced as with Kant. Even the ego, the synthetic unity of apperception, the agency which Kant calls the point upon which the whole of logic depends, is in truth the product as well as the condition of material existence."[37] If one attempts to justify ethics solely in this medium or upon this

31. "The concept of justice . . . is older than morality." *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 98); cf. also Horkheimer's remarks on Kant, *Ibid.*, pp. 88 ff. and 94 ff.

32. Cf. *Zur Kritik der Instrumentellen Vernunft*, p. 206; see also below, Section V.

33. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 81; Horkheimer refers with this expression to the good will as the sole unconditional Good.

34. Cf. *Critical Theory*, pp. 21 and 17 ff.

35. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 93.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

37. Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cum-

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agency, according to Horkheimer, a formalism remains — "a flawless and vacuous procedure"[38] — which does not just indicate the transformation of "pure" reason into unreason, but also raises the question of what that all still has to do with morality. The pure ethics of reason thus appears as a late product of the dialectic of enlightenment — that is, of the triumph of a nature-dominating rationality at the price of its formalization. While Kant wanted to eliminate the consequences of this process by limiting his "enlightening critique," the Marquis de Sade was said to have expressed this bluntly[39]: "Unlike its apologists, the dark writers of the bourgeois[40] did not attempt to deflect the consequences of the Enlightenment with harmonistic doctrines. They refused to pretend that formal reason stood in a closer connection to morality than to immorality."[41]

Thus, in Horkheimer's thought, the pure ethics of reason is both accomplice and victim of the domination of nature; the move from Kant to Schopenhauer is for him an advance in the self-enlightenment of reason and not a relapse into irrationality. After Schopenhauer, a materialist moral philosophy can no longer be rationalist in any substantive sense. It will, of course, offer justifications when it is able to do so; it will not arbitrarily shirk demands for justification, and thereby remains rationalist in a methodical sense. It will, however, give grounds why one cannot justify everything, and then with reasons will reject certain demands for justification. Here we are concerned with what nowadays is referred to as an 'ultimate justification.' Horkheimer considers this specifically idealistic: "While idealism occupies itself with 'constantly calling into question its own presuppositions anew' due to the independent significance the spiritual ("Geistige") holds for it, scrutinization of materialism's own presuppositions is motivated by real difficulties into which the theory depending on them falls. Materialism is in these questions much less 'radical' than idealistic philosophy."[42] Plainly, Horkheimer does not reckon with the phenomenon that it could be internal "real difficulties" of ethics that could compel attempts at ultimate justification. This becomes comprehensible on the background of his thesis that the Moral in morality is precisely the unjustifiable; an 'ultimately justified' ethics would then be an oxymoron, and thus the paths out of those internal difficulties of ethics must be sought from another direction.

## III

With the rejection of the deontological, universalist and rationalistic conceptions of ethics, the fundamentals of Horkheimer's materialistic moral philosophy have emerged. "We have tried to demonstrate that, according to materialism, actions do not derive from an ultimate, absolute thesis

ming (New York: Continuum, 1972) pp. 86-87.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
39. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 93 and ff.
40. Horkheimer elsewhere names Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Mandeville. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 117-8.
42. *Critical Theory*, p. 33.

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. . . . This materialist perspective does not have the solely negative meaning of dismissing an ethics to be grounded metaphysically, but rather has always been understood by materialists in the sense of recognizing the striving of men toward happiness as a natural fact that needs no justification."[43] Here, according to Horkheimer, the idealist need for justification with reasons finds a materialist limit. This *fundamental eudemonism* of the materialist moral philosophy is no mere counterthesis to Kant's ethics, because his privileging of the worthiness of happiness above happiness itself, which one could introduce into the matter here, for its part requires recourse to the "fact of pure practical reason" in order to be plausible — that is to say, a fact which, in contrast to the human striving after happiness, has the disadvantage for the materialist of not existing.[44] Materialist moral philosophy thus rests not upon an absolute demand but only on a much-contested fact, from which, however, as from facts in general, nothing further follows normatively. Thus, "materialism attempts to replace the justification of action with explanation via the historical understanding of the acting individual. It always sees in such justifications an illusion. If most men until now harbor a very strong need for this illusion, if they do not wish to rely merely on feelings of indignation, compassion, love, or solidarity, but rather connect their instinctual drives to an absolute world order by characterizing them as 'ethical,' this still in no way proves the possibility of the rational fulfillment of this need."[45] The retreat of materialist ethics from the justification of action to understanding explanation is no simple error, no uncontrolled discursive switch. "The lives of most men are so miserable, the privations and humiliations so numerous, efforts and rewards stand for the most part in such crass disproportion, that the hope that this earthly order may not be the only one is only too understandable. To the extent that idealism tries to rationalize this hope instead of explaining it for what it is, idealism becomes a vehicle for mystifying the instinctual renunciation compelled by nature and social relations."[46] Ultimate justifications of action are not just illusory, but ideological as well; they amount to "mystification" because they seek to postpone recognition of the validity of the urges toward protest and the hope for improvement until such time as their rationalization has been successfully completed — and that is never the case. For Horkheimer, morality only occurs where men profess their commitment to feelings of "indignation, compassion, love, and solidarity," and indeed precisely when there are no adequate rational grounds to feel this way.

Materialist moral philosophy is not deontological, but eudemonistic; not universalistic, but individualistic and context-bound; not rationalistic — thus irrationalistic? If one reduces the significance of reason from the interpretation of responsible action, the weight of emotions grows; if one limits justifications, unjustifiable decisions gain ground. Horkheimer thus falls not

43. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

44. Even Kant's ethics belongs to the "mere *coups de main* by reason of the consciousness that morality itself is underivable." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 85.

45. *Critical Theory*, p. 23.

46. *Ibid.*

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accidentally into the vicinity of the two most important and influential normative positions of his age: *emotivism* in metaethics and *decisionism*. Horkheimer rehabilitates the emotions; does he therefore defend a mere emotivism? In many passages, the pregnant word "decision" appears; what distinguishes him from Carl Schmitt?

Horkheimer's conception differentiates itself from a pure emotivism first of all in that it is not intended as a contrasting project to rationalism, but rather is indebted to the latter for insight into its limits. Thus, materialism is not for him a straightforward counterposition to that of idealism, but essentially a critique of idealism; only in this manner is the amalgamation of materialism and critical theory at all comprehensible. The materialist knows that one cannot justify everything, and that reason alone — "pure" reason — is incapable of motivating real action. A "pure" Ought, behind which empirical impulses and forces do not stand, is for him a myth; Kant's "heeding the law" thus appears a mere solution to an embarassing dilemma which moreover fails to appreciate the sublime Gestalt of internalized social compulsion to which that formulation points. For Horkheimer, the fiction of purely rational motives of action which results from idealist system-constraints, and the isolation of reason-free emotions upon which emotivism is based, are two sides of the same matter. In the "Juliette" chapter, he describes the Enlightenment as a progressive process of the unmingling of reason and effects, which in the end leaves behind reason as a pure "organ of calculation" and the affects as mere natural facts: "Because reason posits no substantive goals, all affects are equally removed from its governance, and are purely natural.[47] Pure calculating reason is thus no longer capable of morally motivating action; from it flows at worst the coy enticement of the pure ability to command — the perverse Eros of power for the sake of power. Rationality which has been reduced to the naked logic of self-preservation is, for Horkheimer, itself relegated back into nature,[48] because for its part it perpetuates natural constraints instead of sundering them. The dialectic of Enlightenment consists precisely in that reason, which seeks through its formalization constantly to expand its dominion, thereby regresses into the natural depravity which it hopes to avoid. Horkheimer is no pure emotivist because he knows that, before the tribunal of Enlightenment passing judgment on the Enlightenment, neither rationalism nor emotivism has the upper hand; he therefore privileges neither pure reason nor pure feeling.

Ethics cannot survive where reason and emotion are completely separated from each other. This conclusion leads Horkheimer to engage Kant's concept of the "moral feeling" and reinterpret it materialistically. When Horkheimer makes the misleading formulation that ethics is a "psychic state," he means that morality is a psychic disposition which rests upon a certain morally relevant feeling. "Characteristic for the moral feeling is an interest that diverges from the 'natural law' and which has nothing to do with private appropriation

47. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 88 and 89.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

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and possession."[49] The difference between the proclivities toward the "natural law" and the moral feeling is thus also the rational kernel of Kant's distinction between actions performed out of mere inclination and those performed out of duty, but Horkheimer refuses to trace the ethical quality of the moral feeling to a psychologically inexplicable emotional effect of pure rationality as Kant does. What makes the moral feeling ethical is that which points beyond the inclinations to the "natural law" of the existing conditions: "The moral feeling has something to do with love . . . but this love concerns the person not as economic subject nor as an item in the property of the one who loves, but rather as the potential member of a happy humanity. It (i.e., this love) is directed not toward the role and standing of a determinate individual in bourgeois life, but toward his neediness and powers, which point to the future. Unless the aim of a future happy life for all men, which admittedly is yielded not on the basis of a revelation but by the privation of the present, is taken up into the description of this love, it does not admit of a determination. To all, insofar as they are human beings, it wishes the free development of their creative powers. It appears to it that living creatures have a claim to happiness, and it does not in the least request a justification or substantiation thereof . . . . Not the baton of the corporal but the climax of the Ninth Symphony is an expression of the moral feeling."[50] It is important that Horkheimer does not simply link the ethical quality of the moral feeling to a utopian perspective, which increasingly slipped away from him in his later work; whoever believes that it suffices to anticipate utopia in order to be ethical reduces ethics to the philosophy of history. According to Horkheimer, it is the universalist perspective of a claim of *all* to happiness — itself neither further justifiable nor in need of justification — which first makes love morally relevant as inclination, emotion, or passion.

Love in this sense is that aspect of the moral feeling which makes the Other — as Kant formulated it — not merely a means, but recongizes it as an end; it is an end in the light of the anticipation of a liberated and happy humanity.[51] The psychic reality of such an anticipation, however, is *compassion*, which recognizes itself in the suffering Other; therefore, the active form of such anticipation is *solidarity*. Like Schopenhauer, Horkheimer understands compassion not as mere emotion, but as an emotional impulse mediated by insight; he is thus no pure emotivist. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, he delineates compassion more precisely as "the sensuous consciousness of the identity of general and particular, as naturalized mediation." The time has come for an ethics of compassion because this form of mediation was the only one "that was left after the formalization of reason."[52] Precisely because compassion unites in

49. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 93; On Kant's concept of the "moral feeling," cf. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* A 133.

50. *Kritische Theorie* I, p. 94-5.

51. Cf. *Ibid.* The later communicative ethics of Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel could connect up with this motif of the anticipation of the Ideal and thus understand itself as the heir of critical theory.

52. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 101.

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itself the perspectives of the universal and the individual, the general and the particular, it is alone — and not "pure" reason — capable of providing the grounding for the Moral. Horkheimer agrees with those critics of compassion who note that it may be used to cover for becoming overweening or sentimental; its contrary is "bourgeois indifference,"[53] not rationality per se. Reason itself is immoral insofar as it is nothing but the organon of bourgeois indifference.

If compassion and reason do not stand in straightforward contrast to one another, the materialist need not reject justifications to such an extent that he is forced to become a decisionist; at the same time, he also will not believe that no more decisions are necessary because everything is capable of justification. Horkheimer understood the connection between absolute claims to truth and the anxiety of subjective decisions.[54] Whoever recognizes that one cannot justify everything, and that we must simply decide in those cases we cannot justify, is not therefore a decisionist. Horkheimer opposes only too far-reaching, i.e., idealist, claims to justification which necessarily leads to relativism and paralyze praxis. In addition, he insists on the indispensability of empirical, historical, and prognosticating knowledge for those decisions which can be justified to the extent that such knowledge is indeed indispensable.[55]

Just as Horkheimer's critical theory as a whole operates on the razor's edge between metaphysics and positivism,[56] his moral philosophy remains equidistant from pure rationalism, flat emotivism, and abstract decisionism. It is equally incompatible with the metaphysics of values in themselves, "pure" reason, or heroic decisions *ex nihilo* and the positivism of mere feelings. Moreover, Horkheimer describes his decisionism as the result of a purist separation of rationally motivated decisions which can thus be divided up into their basic elements of abstract calculations, emotional motives, and purely spontaneous decision.[57] The difference between a materialist and, on the other hand, an emotivist or decisionist moral philosophy consists in that the latter isolate and dramatize the emotive and voluntarist aspects of real actions out of an idealist despondency that pure reason does not suffice, while the materialist reacts to this rather more calmly. This may be documented by the way of the concept of *interest*, which Horkheimer uses in the quoted description of the moral feeling and also in central programmatic passages in the characterization of critical theory. The "interest in the elimination of social injustice" is for him "the materialist content of the idealist concept of rea-

53. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

54. Cf. *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 235-6; the essay referred to here is "Zum Problem der Wahrheit," originally in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* IV (1935) pp. 321-364. Cf. also *Critical Theory*, pp. 162 ff.

55. Cf. *Critical Theory*, p. 43.

56. Cf. Alfred Schmidt, "Die Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung: Geschite und gegenwärtige Bedeutung" in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Munich: DTV Reprint, 1970/1980) Introduction, Vol. I, pp. 25 ff.

57. Cf. *Critical Theory*, pp. 178-9.

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son."[58] This interest is neither a purely Kantian *interest of reason*, nor quasi-transcendental *cognitive interest*, nor yet a mere *natural fact* which justifies linking critical theory with naturalism.[59] Feelings and emotions such as love or compassion are as little independent of culture as they are the interests of human beings. The concept of "interest" is a systematic lacuna in critical theory, and unfortunately remains so today despite a number of conceptual-historical investigations. The problem of the normative foundations of critical theory would appear today quite different if the latter had not for so long assumed the concept as intuitively clear. Horkheimer situated the concept strategically in the theory without really explicating it. Interests are not mere feelings or emotional predispositions; they are not reducible to impulses of instinct or will; they would have to be conceived as rationally and cognitively elaborated dispositions of motivation and will. In such "elaboration," empirical knowledge, self-knowledge, interpretations of situations, and ends-means calculations would play a role; it is only for this reason that interests are susceptible of change via argument, which is not the case with instinctual impulses, for example. At the same time, the recourse to interests precludes abstract decisionism. Because of the cognitive and rational aspect of the interests, interest-governed decisions are never pure acts of will which occur where the force of argument cannot reach.

In materialist moral philosophy, "interest" is a mediating concept that should integrate extremes, not the name of a principle. "Interest" is not fit to be a principle because it is itself a historically, socially, and psychically mediated phenomenon. Insofar as the materialist bases his ethics on an interest, he places himself on shaky ground; but at the same time, he reinforces it with the notion that the ground of other conceptions of ethics trembles less — indeed, he suspects their groundlessness. The theoretical insecurity of materialist moral principles is the price of the insight that all moral principles have their place in concrete historical and social life circumstances which orginated in human praxis, and which are therefore malleable. Horkheimer's materialist ethics is thus primarily a *political* ethics, which could be reduced to the formulation, instead of rationalistic private morality, *solidarity* and *politics*.[60] According to Horkheimer, the consistency of Kant's own thoughts led him beyond the limits of bourgeois morality; his thesis is that the universalist principles implicit therein indeed manifested themselves as political and social principles.[61] In this sense, Horkheimer understood critical theory not just as the critic of idealist moral philosophy, but also as its heir.

58. Cf. Note 13 above.

59. It is my impression that the quasi-transcendental "cognitive interest" for which Jürgen Habermas argues in *Knowledge and Human Interest* and thereafter is more strongly inspired by Max Weber than by Max Horkheimer. On this, cf. Max Weber, "Die 'Objektivität' sozialwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis," Pt. II, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen, 1973) pp. 161 ff.

60. *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 95 ff.

61. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5.

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IV

My sympathetic reconstruction of Horkheimer's implicit moral philosophy would be incomplete were it not to mention the systematic difficulties into which that philosophy brings the sympathizer. From the standpoint of Hegel, this moral philosophy appears as a critical theory of bourgeois ethical life in the context of which morality becomes a historical phenomenon in need of explanation, without therefore losing its significance for the contemporary orientation of action. The deontological, universalist, and rationalist self-understanding of this morality is put fundamentally in question. Horkheimer distinguishes himself from Hegel's philosophy of morality by subsuming morality under the Marxist dialectic of sublation and realization. If morality and bourgeois society belong together, and that society can no longer be understood as a moment of an overarching, concrete ethical life which is the embodiment of objective reason, then the Good cannot be exhausted by that which morally "should be" in the here and now, but must instead point beyond it.[62] That Horkheimer not only demonstrates this utopian surplus of bourgeois morality, but that he would like to identify with it and make it into the standard of political praxis is no mere moral or political decision of a sociologist of morality: Horkheimer gives reasons for it, and this is primarily what makes him a moral philosopher. "Reason in history" is no longer available to Horkheimer the materialist; however the historically powerful character of bourgeois morality says nothing about its reasonableness or binding force. The pure reason to which the Kantian withdraws is sufficiently suspect of formalism and thus of amorality. Whence can we take the grounds for the rescue of amorality, if they are to be rational grounds?

The fact that Horkheimer himself adduces grounds shows that he does not take his own suspicion that moral justifications merely follow idealist system constraints or academic rituals of self-affirmation as the occasion for remaining at the level of moral phenomenology. Under post-Hegelian conditions, anyone who attempts to offer justifications has problems of justification, and Horkheimer has them as well. That he divides the traditional problem of morality into the two elements of "moral feeling" and "politics under universalist principles" amounts in truth only to a displacement of the problem; it is not thereby resolved. Rather, two questions now arise which need to be answered without recourse to a metaphysics of history: What precisely makes the moral feeling moral? How can the universalist problems of emancipatory politics be defended against skeptical objections? I would like to demonstrate briefly that Horkheimer at this point connects *hermeneutic* problems with problems of *principle* without thus being able to resolve the associated dif-

62. At this point, Horkheimer implicitly offers an alternative to modern neo-Aristotelianism, which as philosophical prop of our contemporary neo-conservatism prefers to interpret and to ground every ethics from the standpoint of a given lived ethos; Horkheimer, too, pursues this approach, but he turns it in a critical direction. On neo-Aristotelianism, cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Was ist Neoaristotelismus?" in Wolfgang Kuhlmann, ed., *Moralität und Sittlichkeit* (Frankfurt 1986).

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ficulties. Nonetheless, he points in the direction in which a resolution of the entire problem complex might be sought.

To remain bound to feelings when attempting to evaluate the moral feeling would amount to a *positivism of emotion* against which Horkheimer always stood firm. The same is true for interests — including, indeed precisely, the "interest in the rational organization of human activities" which "critical theory consciously pursues in the formation of its categories and in all phases of its development"; critical theory, according to Horkheimer, sets itself the task of "illuminating and legitimating" this interest.[63] A positivism of interests, which ultimately would amount to the political hamstringing of critical theory by that power which understood how to successfully define this interest, is thus also precluded, for interest-guided theory returns to its guiding interest and makes itself into its object. This feedback loop between interest and theory, which places both moments in a reciprocally constitutive relation and thus hinders their one-sided absolutization, could be understood as dialectical if dialectics of structure were separable from absolute idealism. Because this is not the case, I prefer to speak here of *hermeneutics*, even though this word has for so long been in the *index verborum prohibitorum* in Frankfurt.[64] The connection between interest and theory in Horkheimer's work is hermeneutic because they form a hermeneutic circle: the interest in rational life relations has the function of a pre-understanding that is constitutive of theory, but which itself must be "illuminated and legitimated" — that is, made comprehensible in its empirical and normative sense — by the theory so constituted. The hermeneutic circle created by interest and theory could be described as the product of the unification of the perspectives of the first and third persons: the interest which determines the theory construction of the critical theorist arises simultaneously on the side of its objects and vice versa. Such a hermeneutics is materialist because, in contrast to Heidegger and Gadamer, it interprets its own pre-understanding not existentially, but socially; critical theory understands itself not as existential necessity, but rather as the intellectual aspect of real historical changes which deirive from the material life-process. This is precisely the meaning of the thesis, which Horkheimer himself formulated, that social theory belongs a priori to its object realm; it exemplifies a hermeneutic trope.[65]

The limits of hermeneutics as practical philosophy run where reference to an existentially or socially conditioned pre-understanding is no longer adequate to the task of "illuminating and legitimating" the not merely historically generated meaning of the practically intended. What makes *rational* those life relationships in which critical theory is interested? What is the *Unjust* of the "social

63. *Critical Theory*, p. 245.

64. In the "Positivist Dispute," Habermas defended as hermeneutic the dialectical position of the Frankfurt theorists.

65. Cf. *Critical Theory*, pp. 199 ff.; in addition, see Jürgen Habermas, "Analytic Theory of Knowledge and Dialectics" in T.W. Adorno, et. al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (London 1976) pp. 131-163.

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injustice," the elimination of which critical theory has made its aim? What is rational and just is *not* obvious as such; nor do the moral feeling, the critical impulse, the practical interest suffice as standards. The reason is that such singular and historically conditioned urges and dispositions are not capable of constituting the *universalist* meaning of the fundamental concepts "reason" and "justice." The same is true of reflections of the hermeneutic self-consensus type, for they only make clear the historically and life-world conditioned standpoint of the theoretician, from which reason and justice may *appear* to him as universal principles. To consider them so indicates an objectivistic regression of the hermeneuticist, who is the less excusable the more uncompromisingly he understands himself as a critic of ideology.

Via the critique of ideology, Horkheimer destroyed with reasons the universalism of bourgeois morality and moral philosophy but attempted at the same time to rescue politically that which therein it was universalistically intended — the ideas of freedom, equality, and justice. Precisely at this point, however, he is pulled back again by the problem of justification, which cannot be sidestepped hermeneutically. Horkheimer is no mere hermeneuticist because he still takes seriously the problem of justification as a *problem of principle.* He says of critical theory: "The perspectives which it takes from historical analysis to be the aims of human activity — especially the idea of a rational organization of society that will meet the needs of the whole community — are immanent in human labor, without being conscious to the individuals or the public spirit in the correct form. There exists a certain interest in experiencing and perceiving these tendencies."[66] What is hermeneutic in this passage is the notion that one could extract practical aims from a properly developed historical analysis — in particular, in the feed-back between the interest that is constitutive of theory and that which generates theory: both interests ultimately relate to the same thing. No longer merely hermeneutic, on the other hand, is the thesis that the idea of a rational social organization is immanent in human labor itself. This thesis is a matter of principle, but is nowhere any more rigorously justified by Horkheimer. Elsewhere he says: "The aim of a rational society, which today admittedly appears to be upheld only in imagination, is really inherent in every human being,"[67] but here too one seeks in vain for more precise details. These and similar formulations reveal that Horkheimer had at least sensed a justification deficit in critical theory; he recognized that reference to a reciprocally determination relationships between practical-political interest and critical social theory does not suffice to protect the unredeemed bourgeois ideal of freedom, equality, and justice from the suspicion of simply being culturally specific curiosities or mere ideology. As long as they rotate within the hermeneutic circle, the relativist and ideology-critical skeptic remains in the right, and critical theory is then not much more than a civil war party made up of powerless and quickly-disillusioned intellectuals.

66. *Critical Theory*, p. 213.
67. *Critical Theory*, p. 251.

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References to human labor, to "every human being" or to a certain concept of man determined by critical theory[68] in the context of questions of justification were mere episodes with the early Horkheimer. He later grew closer to Kantian positions again to the extent that the political experiences of the 30's extinguished even the weak Hegelian-Marxist faith in historical "tendencies." What is the *universally*-rational that is supposed to be "really inherent" in "every human being" — if not precisely instrumental reason? In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer points to the ambiguity of the Kantian concept of reason: "As the transcendental, supraindividual self, reason comprises the idea of a free, human social life in which men organize themselves as a universal subject and overcome the conflict between pure and empirical reason in the conscious solidarity of the whole. This represents the idea of true universality: utopia. At the same time, however, reason constitutes the court of judgment of calculation, which adjusts the world for the ends of self-preservation of the object from mere sensory material in order to make it the material of subjugation."[69] In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno sought the rational in reason, which is not exhausted in being an organon for the domination of nature, in the self-reflection of reason.[70] It should be clear that this remains well behind what Horkheimer says approvingly in the quoted passage about Kant. Once the critique of morality of Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche has come into the world, one can only reconstruct the universalist meaning of the main precepts of bourgeois ethics — which are also those of critical theory — if one demonstrates, with Kant, the ideas of a free and solidaristic human social life *in reason* itself as elements that cannot be sought out of existence; mere recalling of the mechanisms, consequences, and costs of nature-dominating rationalization is inadequate here. If the rational concept of reason contains the idea of free and solidary socialization, then it remains to be seen what this idea represents in "every human being." At this point, the aporias of the philosophy of consciousness at least make plausible the transition to a speech- or communications-theoretical grounding of critical theory; alternatives thereto have not yet come into sight. As long as one does not close one's eyes before the internal problems of justification of critical theory, especially in ethics, one will no longer decry the "communications-theoretical turn" as a sin and wish to turn it around.[71]

## V

On the other hand, the communicative or discursive ethics which would like to inherit and continue critical theory must for its own part consider how it will respond to the objections of Horkheimer against an idealist ethics. For discursive ethics is deontological, universalist, and rationalist in the sense that it seeks to prove that the Ought is the rationally justifiable and precludes ques-

68. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
69. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 83-4.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 38 ff.
71. On this, cf. as interesting documentation: Löbig and Schweppenhäuser, eds., *Hamburger Adorno-Symposion* (Lüneburg, 1984).

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tions of motivation.[72] It must admit of being questioned by Horkheimer as to whether, if it has formulated the problem of ethics as the problem of universally binding norms, it has then spoken at all of the ethical as the *Good*. Horkheimer remains a eudemonist because he considers a deontological ethics untenable in a post-metaphysical age. At the same time, the identification of the good with the rational must appear to him — as to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche before him — as a rationalist prejudice. Universalist validity claims can only be raised in ethics when one believes that the will must become ever purer — that is, more rational — in order to be able to become the good will. But even if one no longer equates the good will with the pure, merely rational will, the question remains whether the *rational* is the Good. Is that which we can ground rationally thus and exclusively *for that reason* good? Not only *substantive*, but also *procedural* rationalism in ethics leaves open the question concerning the Good.

Thus, to the extent that it seeks to secure the claim to universality of binding norms in the medium of procedural rationality, discursive ethics thus runs the risk of losing from view the morally Good. Habermas has taken this into account with the admission that a procedurally rational and thus formalistic ethics must limit itself to normative problems of justice and must exclude evaluative questions regarding the good and proper life. At best, such an ethics can treat these questions as candidates for potential norms with a claim to generally binding force.[73] Assuming for the moment that discursive ethics deals better with the problem of relativism than the materialist moral philosophy of Horkheimer, would it not be possible for the latter to issue an invitation to the discursive ethicists to *broaden* the foundations of normative justificaion so that, when the rationality justified is spoken of, the Good is discussed as well? In order to achieve that objective, it would in my opinion be necessary to abandon pure congitivism in the justification of norms and, without fear of falling into emotivism or decisionism, go into emotive and voluntaristic factors. The discursive ethicist will respond that this concerns only the motivational issues and not the validity-meaning of that which is at issue in the ethics debate. From Horkheimer one can learn that is it not possible simply to shunt motives into the realm of psychology if one seriously confronts the matter of interests, and not just the problematic interest of reason in itself which Kant referred to as the "moral feeling." A materialist ethics that confronts interests must also interpret materialistically the Kantian interest in the generalizability of interests, without therefore ending up in a position of historical relativism. What kind of interest is that — an interest in the Just? Is it merely an interest in knowing what is just, in knowing the Just? Does it not contain as well its *recognition*, that is, an affective attachment to the Just and the will to pursue in one's own decisions that which is known as just?

72. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einem Begründungsprogramm," in *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983) pp. 53 ff.

73. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Über Moralität und Sittlichkeit: Was macht eine Lebensform 'rational'?" in Herbert Schnädelbach, ed., *Rationalität: Philosophische Beiträge*, (Frankfurt, 1984) pp. 220 ff.

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Horkheimer's moral philosophy can help stimulate at least a critique of pure communicative reason in the fundamental discussion of the ethicists. Were the discursive ethicist ready to take into consideration not just the communicative, but also the emotive and voluntarist conditions of real morality, he would perhaps be able to perceive again, in the methodically excluded motives, recognition of the discursively grounded, and thus — with practically greater significance — the Good which has thereby fallen from view. In his essay "Kant's Philosophy and the Enlightenment," (1962) Horkheimer speaks of the capacity for "devotion and happiness" as forming "the precondition for the concern about the welfare of the whole, for self-abnegation, indeed for the comprehension of the theoretical idea."[74] Here it becomes clear that even the purely cognitive interest in the Moral is no *merely* cognitive affair. Even less is it its practically significant recognition, as ethical intellectualism would have it. Why do we even want to know what is moral? Why do we conduct discourses of justification? Horkheimer shows us that the Good cannot coincide with the discursively justifiable because discursive justification itself — like critical theory as a whole, and theory in general — depends upon factors that are not discursively justifiable: the capacity for "devotion and happiness" is always presupposed in the "concern for the welfare of the whole," in "self-abnegation," indeed in the "comprehension of the theoretical idea,' and all this together first constitutes the interest which critical theory itself pursues.

Thus the merely cognitive interest in the ethical is itself no mere cognitive affair. This is especially true when we assume the "moral point of view," the perspective of universalization with "practical intent." From Horkheimer one can learn that the *cognitive* interest in ethics need not necessarily be *ethical*, even where it is not *purely* cognitive. What is ethical in the universalization of maxims and interests if the wholly amoral instrumental rationality of calculated self-preservation can be expressed therein? (In a thoroughly rationalized society it is pragmatic to live according to generalizable precepts.) Kant did not confront this problem because for him the morally Good coincided with the rational. But if the rational is indeed a necessary but by no means sufficient condition of the Good, then universalization alone no longer suffices for the passage from rationality into morality. Horkheimer sees that the *interest* in morality itself must be a *moral* interest in order to constitute morality; opportunists and cynics can also be practically interested in the ethical, but for other than ethical reasons. The above goes *a fortiori* for the practical recognition of that which is known as morally good. The problem of recognition has long been discussed in the form of the question, "Why be moral?"[75] Translated into the language of discursive ethics, it reads: "Why should I even participate in ethical disputes in which it can be demonstrated to me tran-

74. *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft*, p. 206; cf. also *Kritische Theorie* I, pp. 247 ff.

75. Cf. F.H. Bradley, "Why be Moral?" *Ethical Studies* (1876); Gernot Reibenschuh, "Warum moralisch sein? Zur Kritik soziologischer Moralbegründung" in Manfred Riedel, ed., *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, Vol. II (Freiburg, 1974) pp. 85 ff.

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scendentally that through my participation in them I have always already recognized ethically relevant norms?" To seek the answer in a decision which is not further justifiable or in a calculus of shrewd securing of identity[76] would expose the practically significant recognition of what is discursively justified to motives that are in no way to be characterized as morally good. In short, one can practically recognize the morally Good for other than ethical reasons, as Kant already knew.

Horkheimer's critical theory thus reckons with emotive and voluntaristic foundations of morality and of moral philosophy because it has perceived that morality cannot be recontructed from rationality alone. It calls these foundations "moral feeling," which it bases upon the interest in the Just, that is, on that which discursive ethics believes it can justify purely cognitivistically. The theory is materialist because it claims that the good will is no longer describable as the pure will and because it forms its ethical quality with the "moral feeling" only under contingent conditions. There is no *a priori* guarantee for the existence of the latter. The capacity for "devotion and happiness," as ultimately contingent cultural fact, first constitutes the interest which "deviates from the natural law."[77] It is the source of motivation both for the question of the Good and the Just and for its recognition, but it is not *only* this. Because this capacity is that which makes the will into the good will, it is itself a necessary condition of the Good.

76. On this point, cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Diskursethik," pp. 108 ff. While Apel never disputes the existence of a "decisionistic residual," Habermas attempts at this point to refer the skeptic to real conditions of his survival as a person; he thus adopts a position that approaches that of Hobbes and Hobbesianism.

77. *Kritische Theorie* 1, p. 93.

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# Notes and Commentary:

## RIZZI'S HONOR

by Frank Adler

In the famous opening sentence of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx notes that somewhere Hegel had written that great world-historical phenomena occur twice, neglecting to add, however, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Given what we now know of the heretofore hidden side of Bruno Rizzi, still another revision seems in order: sometimes such phenomena make yet a third appearance, this time as embarrassment, rank embarrassment.

Indeed, Rizzi's name surfaced in three such sequential contexts. The first was in the late 1930s when non-stalinist Marxists, primarily Trotskyists, were debating whether or not a "new class" had emerged in the Soviet Union. It was here that Bruno R.'s *La Bureaucratisation du Monde* was published in Paris in 1939 to be mysteriously confiscated almost immediately by the Popular Front government. The second was in the late 1950s when Djilas' recently published polemic (*The New Class*) stimulated numerous debates on the social nature of communist systems, including earlier theoretical attempts at explaining the origin, inner-workings and consequences of this bureaucratic formation. It was here that Rizzi's name resurfaced from almost total obscurity as the would-be victim of James Burnham's alleged plagiarism (*The Managerial Revolution*), a charge that Rizzi himself, the unknown prophet resurrected as a prosperous shoe manufacturer, would make *ad nauseam* for all who had the patience (and gullibility) to hear. The third was in 1977, the year of his death when, for the first time, a sanitized commercial edition of his book was published in Italy. It was here that Rizzi was uncritically lauded by leading socialist intellectuals for his theory of bureaucratic collectivism, and ludicrously appropriated by the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) as the spiritual father of self-management and democratic socialism. Indeed, this celebrated edition bore a preface by none other than Bettino Craxi, the current Prime Minister of Italy, and an introduction by Luciano Pellicani. Even Telos had the dubious distinction, thanks to Antonio Carlo and Umberto Melotti, of being one of the very few journals to note Rizzi's passing with what must now be regarded as a thoroughly embarrassing obituary ("In Memory of Bruno Rizzi"), an honor usually reserved for the likes of Herbert Marcuse, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Ernst Bloch (who, not having suffered enough indignities in life, would in death share a vault beside Rizzi in the same misbegotten issue (No. 33, Fall 1977).

How and why is all this coming out in the wash now? To be perfectly honest, we recently discovered the error of our ways by sheer accident, and by setting the record straight we hope to bury Bruno R. once and for all. Recently, Telos received Haberkern's seemingly intemperate review of the newly-translated English edition of Rizzi's work. At that point it was not quite clear what to do with it. Informally, we had already discussed whether or not Telos would add to the academic ho-hum which greeted Westoby's English translation of *The Bureaucratization of the World* ("at last this underground classic has finally been translated . . ."), written by such scholars as Lewis Coser and Dennis Wrong who, beyond recycling familiar banalities, added



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nothing to what was already known about Rizzi. None of the Telos regulars wanted to bother with it. Thus, feeling obliged to run something on one of our fallen heroes and, no doubt, intuitively impressed by anything snappy and irreverent, I was asked to look over the Haberkern piece. Regrettably, all my scholarly prejudices quickly surfaced as, late one night, I made my way through Haberkern's review. Here was a Bruno Rizzi who ran counter literally to all that had been written — an anti-semite, a pro-fascist, and a rank apologist (before the fact!) for the Nazi-Soviet rape of Poland. I consulted my Italian edition of *Il collettivismo burocratico*, finding little evidence to support Haberkern's dramatic charges. True, he referred to the original 1939 Paris edition, which I had never seen, but surely, I surmised, Italian scholars of the stature of Giorgio Galli, Luciano Pellicani, and Antonio Carlo would have picked such things up, if indeed they existed, while researching their separate essays on Rizzi. How could it possibly be that they were all off the mark and Haberkern was right? Just who was this Haberkern fellow anyway? By the wee hours of the morning I dashed off a rather blunt and unflattering assessment of the whole thing. Haberkern justifiably took offense, and together with an undeservedly measured response sent a complete photocopy of the 1939 Paris edition which, as it turns out, he obtained from Hal Draper who, in turn, had apparently ripped it off from Rizzi himself (according to Rizzi) in 1958, during a trip to Italy.[1] Thus, Haberkern was right and all the literati, Telos included, in effect bought into something roughly tantamount to the Brooklyn Bridge. This is why I was forced to do penance by translating Rizzi's particularly odious chapter "La Question Juive," and write a brief piece exposing our indirect culpability which would, at the same time, raise questions concerning the true culprits, our fellow Italian intellectuals, who should have known better, as well as the opportunistic appropriation of Rizzi by the PSI.

Clearly, Haberkern was not only fully justified in his critique, but had, if anything, underplayed just how ridiculous a theorist and how vile a man Bruno R., the PSI's new-found hero, truly was. Beneath the repetitive bombast, malevolent vituperations, and pseudointellectual neologisms lay one of the most insidious apologies for the twin brutalities of his time, fascism and stalinism, both praised by Rizzi in the name of anti-capitalism and socialism. Oddly enough, the analysis of the U.S.S.R. and the theory of bureaucratic collectivism for which Rizzi came to be known represent less than a third of the original text, ninety-six pages (which properly edited and stripped of repetition would total less than twenty). This part, and this part only, was eventually translated into Italian and English, accounting for the apparent thinness of Rizzi's "historic underground classic" (seventy pages in the 1975 Italian edition, sixty pages in the 1985 English edition). In terms of Rizzi's general argument and call to arms, this part is actually far less significant than the final ninety-eight page section entitled "*Où va le monde*," for it is here that bureaucratic collectivism is placed within a totalizing worldview which calls upon English, French and American workers to break with their capitalist leaders, join forces with Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini (all of whom should justifiably commandeer adjacent territories for economic expansion — *espace vital*, in Rizzi's own words) to form an anti-capitalist bloc, and once capitalism has been defeated there will be a smooth transition to socialism, a classless society and world harmony. By then there will be no more Jews, since the struggle against capitalism necessarily entails the struggle against this "pile of capitalist shit,"[2] an "integral part of the enemy army."[3]

1. Rizzi, Bruno, *Il Collettivismo Burocratico* (Milan: SugarCo Edizioni, 1977), p. 115.
2. Rizzi, Bruno, *La Bureaucratisation du Monde* (Paris: 1939), p. 300.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

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According to Rizzi, the so-called struggle against fascism was little more than a trick used by the capitalist ruling class of the "plutocratic nations" (England, France and the United States) to keep in line both their domestic proletariat and the new anti-capitalist dictatorships (Germany, Italy and Russia), "dictatorships" only because capitalism from without blocked the development of their economic forces, not for any intrinsic reasons. "Smash the capitalist dikes and the dictators will become democrats, liberals and knights of the immortal principles."[4] Of course, any serious student of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, like Rizzi during the all too significant year of 1939, knew that this is what they had in mind all along. With optimistic economism Rizzi argued that as these dictatorships undergo further development, "the totalitarian State will progressively shed its political characteristics, while conserving only those of an administrative nature. At the end of the process we will have a society without classes and Socialism. *Vive le Socialisme*!"[5] How comforting that must have been to all fair-minded Europeans by the end of 1939, after the Anschluss of Austria, Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War, the capitulation at Munich, Hitler's army marching into Czechoslovakia, and the Nazi-Soviet dismemberment of Poland. How reassuring must have been Rizzi's heroic battle-cry: "*Vive le socialisme! Vive le bloc anticapitaliste! Vive le monde nouveau!*"

Rizzi's anti-semitism speaks all too clearly for itself. The struggle against capitalism must be identified with the struggle against the Jewish people. What better proof is there than Einstein's advice to his fellow Jews to rally behind England, plutocratic nation *par excellence*.[6] Apparently, it never occurred to Rizzi that the winner of the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics might have had some reason other than "pro-capitalism" for supporting England in its opposition to the Third Reich which, through the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, had reduced him to the status of *Untermensch*, deprived him of all civil rights and confiscated his property. No, if Einstein were not such a typically Jewish money-grubber, he would have resolutely rallied behind the anti-capitalist Hitler and goose-stepped *vers le monde nouveau*. Rizzi's anti-semitism, which in "normal" times might be dismissed as idiosyncratic prejudice, must be viewed against the harsh reality of the late 1930s when Jews became progressively excluded from all aspects of social, economic and cultural life. By November 1938, *Kristallnacht* — a night of broken windows, looted shops, and burning synagogues — ushered in a new series of officially-sponsored programs which led directly to the "aryanization" of Jewish property, ghettoization, and finally deportation to concentration camps. Meanwhile, in Rizzi's native Italy the Fascist government had enacted its own Nuremberg-inspired set of racial laws during the Fall of 1938, measures which, unlike Germany, never enjoyed the backing or acquiescence of the citizenry, let alone the civil service itself. In fact, Rizzi's virulent anti-semitism goes well beyond the typical fascist, home-grown strain; one would have to look far and wide to come up with a notable Italian fascist who wrote tracts equal to Rizzi's "*La Question Juive*" — perhaps Giovanni Preziosi, the defrocked priest and pro-German publicist who even Mussolini could tolerate in only the smallest of doses.[7]

Anti-semitism was perhaps the most enduring attribute of Rizzi's life. In June 1940, several days after the fall of Paris, he published a pamphlet "*Ecoute, Citoyen!*" calling for

4. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
7. On the history of Jews under Italian fascism, see Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei Italiani sotto il Fascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), and Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini e la Questione Ebraica* (Milan: Edizioni di Comunita, 1982).

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France to be cleansed of "the judeo-masonic vermin."[8] Not even the holocaust seems to have modified his post-war views. In various polemics regarding *La Bureaucratisation du Monde*, Rizzi never owned up to the fact that the original 1939 edition had been banned for its provocative anti-semitism. During a private conversation with Hal Draper in 1958, he reaffirmed his earlier racial slanders, accepting as authentic the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and claiming that the First International was a Jewish conspiracy, though Marx himself was unaware of this.[9] Responding to Pierre Naville's claim that anti-semitism was one of the reasons he had not been well-received in Parisian left-wing circles, Rizzi again reaffirmed his earlier views that a struggle against capitalism coincided with a struggle against the Jewish people who, for the most part, were capitalists. "I unveil all the enemies of socialism, not backing down before those who would accuse me of being an anti-semite to please the Jewish capitalists."[10]

In light of all this, how could Rizzi have been so revered by Italian socialist intellectuals and appropriated by the PSI? Two possible answers immediately come to mind: incompetence and/or bad faith. As for the first, one would expect rookie graduate students, let alone full-blown intellectuals, to check their sources. Is it possible that those socialist intellectuals who had written on Rizzi, those who knew him personally, and those who helped prepare the 1977 edition of *Il Collettivismo Burocratico*, never consulted the original French text? That is entirely possible, since few copies of the 1939 edition might have been escaped confiscation, and Rizzi might have been telling the truth that in 1958 Hal Draper pinched his one remaining volume. Yet, if several copies are to be found in libraries this side of the Atlantic (usually misfiled, thanks to an original error by the Hoover Library, under "Rizzi Bruno" and stuck in the Bs[11]), it is hard to believe that no copies are to be found in French or Italian libraries if one looked hard enough. Even if no copies of the 1939 edition were available, enough dirt already had surfaced in Rizzi's 1958-59 polemics with *Le Contrat Social* (some of which are actually included in the 1977 Italian edition) to raise serious questions about his earlier pro-fascist stance and anti-semitism. If indeed such suspicions had surfaced — and how could they not! — why would Rizzi nevertheless be packaged as an unrecognized genius, as a mentor, as the father of self-management and socialist pluralism? Here one must raise the question of bad faith. Does one simply showcase the Bruno Rizzi one would have wanted, keeping the pro-fascist, anti-semitic skeleton safely tucked away in the closet? The opportunism of the PSI, and particularly its leader Bettino Craxi, is easier to understand. On the one hand, they never lose an opportunity to embarrass the Italian Communist Party, to link it, theoretically and practically, with the Soviet debacle. At the very moment Eurocommunism was distancing itself from East European "really existing socialism" and reaffirming its commitment to the Western democratic traditions, the PSI countered with a multi-pronged attack including Craxi's challenge to Berlinguer to unambiguously repudiate that very Leninism which had been sacred to generations of the PCI's rank-and-file, and promoting Rizzi's theory of bureaucratic collectivism to serve, at the same time, as a "new" critique of Marxist-Leninism, as well as the centralizing tendencies inherent in state capitalism, and also as a rationale for a "new" socialist agenda (self-management, decentraliza-

8. Westoby, Adam, Introduction, from Rizzi, Bruno, *The Bureaucratization of the World* (New York: Free Press, 1985), p. 18.

9. Bell, Daniel, "The Strange Tale of Bruno R.," in *The New Leader*, September 28, 1959, p. 20.

10. Rizzi, B., *Il Collettivismo Burocratico*, p. 112.

11. Hal Draper, letter to the editor, *The New Leader*, October 12, 1959, p. 29.

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tion, market efficiencies, etc.). Here Bruno Rizzi would have his fifteen minutes in the sun as had, at various times, Proudhon, Otto Bauer, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Regarding Rizzi, however, none of this will wash. He is finally out of the closet and it is time for all to own up and put their cards on the table.

# THE JEWISH QUESTION

## by Bruno Rizzi*

> "Trotsky had to succumb in his political struggle against Stalin as had the old guard, and also as the Jews must succumb under the dictators. Why? The Marxist Trotsky had the duty to explain this to us."

In one part of his *The Dusk of Civilization*, Arturo Labriola doubts the fact that races are historical "creations." We believe this is precisely what is in question and take the opportunity to pay tribute to the multifaceted, disorderly, yet genial notions of this thinker.

All the racist theories of Rosenberg, Hitler, Italian racists, etc. can not withstand the weakest blows of science. Questions of blood, origin, etc., are nothing but empty words in our modest opinion. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the inhabitants of the world differentiate themselves through particular characteristics — physical type, appearance, religion, morality, ethics, economics — in different categories. Within each one of these such characteristics reveal an affinity.

In our opinion, the two great determining factors of race characteristics are represented by the climatological and social ambiance.

The last centuries of our history have divided populations according to national characteristics. The bourgeois nation has been the base on which populations have taken on today's predominant characteristics.

The Italian fascists, in the act of saying many erroneous things on the racial problem, have arrived at the conclusion — we might rather say the prophesy — that there exists an Italian race. We believe their point of view is just and exact. More and more, North and South blend in the Italian peninsula, leading to the creation of a unique type of Italian. We believe one could observe the same process, even more advanced, in France, Germany, England, the United States, etc.

We repeat that for us the so-called races are nothing other than historical formations emerging from the social and climatological ambiance in a politically intercommunicating circle, that is to say, one in which the members are assembled and bound by social relations.

*Originally published in the 1939 edition of *La Bureaucratisation du Monde*, Appendix, Chapter IV, "La Question Juive." Translated by Frank Adler.

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We have not yet arrived at the formation of a standardized national type, yet already economic development necessitates an enlargement of the national base. It appears to us that the bases are existing today, arriving at a fusion among those most closely situated, and on the base of these fusions, one will proceed to a new discrimination between the races.

Given that economic development is the predominant factor at the time when great new political unities are formed, where it is necessary, affinities of a racial character must be sacrificed to economic necessity. Nevertheless, we believe that in practice such cases will be easily resolved because in the world there is so much space hardly touched.

We believe that our planet will be divided into a small number of political unities around a leading central core. We will have a Latino-Mediterranean Unity, a German Unity, a Salvo-Siberian Unity, a Yellow Unity led by Japan, an Indian Unity and a North American-Anglo-Saxon Unity.

There will be, more or less, seven or eight politico-economic unities to which will be attributed the natural resources of the world in proportion to the number of inhabitants and the capacity for exploitation.

In the general interest, all should work in the most rational and profitable manner. A great exchange of products will be necessary and profitable between the new politico-economic unities. Evidently, it would be useless to have Indians manufacture watches when they could render much greater service to the human community producing basic and commonly used products.

We would like to speak of the Jewish question, and with our customary frankness, stripped of all prejudice, expose our point of view, submitting it simply to the scrutiny of proletarian thought to be discussed and resolved. Our only aim is thus to pose these problems which we are convinced the workers cannot ignore at this moment of their revolution.

The Jews have no national base, but incontestably form a nation, shall we say fluid. Their social, religious, economic, etc. attachments pass above all the boundaries and succeed in maintaining a social unity which we believe cannot be placed in doubt. For reasons which are particular to them, they appear as the most jealously racist nation in the world, and they have even had the pretention of being more intelligent than the others. We believe that even what we are going to say will seem straight-forward to any objective observer. Originally, they were a people of shepherds and farmers, but they were dispersed throughout the world where they abandoned themselves solely to trade, speculation, finance, banking, insurance, etc. In a word, they are capitalists for the most part. We have seen very few Jewish workers, and these for us are not Jews but simply workers.

Economic development for the past two thousand years has found the Jews in a socially rich position which became even more so during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The nineteenth century represents for the people of Israel an absolute delirium of riches, and the statistics on private wealth are there to furnish all the evidence. In France alone, where national wealth was estimated to be around a trillion, three-fourths belonged to only two thousand Jews.

We are not here to make accusations of original sin against the Jewish people. We only make statement of fact and must conclude that the struggle against capitalism must be identified, even if only partially, with the struggle against the Jewish people. We could give numerous examples coming from Jews themselves, but one will suffice: recently the great Einstein intuitively advised his Jewish compatriots to give unlimited support

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to England, that England which represents the oldest and most oppressive capitalism, to say no more, where the proletariat itself is spoiled to the bone by capitalism. Let the workers of the world remember that one time when English workers decided to call a general strike, the English workers took this so seriously that "sportingly" they arranged a football match between the strikers and the police! This simple fact is more than significant, but we could cite examples in abundance, even of a personal nature.

Let the workers and their revolutionary avant-garde think a bit about this. They will see that they cannot put aside the Jewish question and perhaps the fact that this was never dealt with admits a bit of that opportunism which was always at the base of the European labor movement. We Marxists never made an anti-Jewish campaign because we included the Jews in the Capitalists. We are still at the same point, but since the moment has come to dismantle the capitalist world, the question cannot remain in the shadows and we must undertake en masse an anti-Jewish campaign because the Jews and capitalists generally are one and the same thing.

The racist struggles of national socialism and fascism, fundamentally, are nothing but an anti-capitalist campaign led by a new social synthesis, theoretically erroneous but practically just. The action, blind as always, of the new ruling class turns out to be more correct than the enlightened action of the social antithesis. Hitler is right and we are wrong. We must correct ourselves and become anti-Jewish because we are anti-capitalists.

The anti-Jewish "pogrom" which inexorably and progressively is beginning to occur throughout the entire world does not issue forth from nothing, not even from the limited depth of racial knowledge advanced by self-styled racists. We usually laugh at the theoretical reasons behind German racism, but our duty is to study the problem in depth to discover what lies underneath. We do this because usually nothing truly important takes place in the world without reason, even if the theoretical explanations used to account for such phenomena may be classified among the most absurd. We would find that history has already overtaken us, as we remarked to comrade Trotsky, in December 1938, regarding the disappearance of private property.

Yes, it must be openly admitted — it is a disgrace — but one must say it: it is not we, the social antithesis, who will completely overturn the old dominant capitalist class, but the new synthesis, a dominant class of the next society, as yet unformed, which struggles blindly on the social battle field, like the useless havoc made by Polyphemus, blinded by Ulysses, but the path to the new society is opened, while the social antithesis, supreme disgrace, hides behind the back of the old decrepit dominant class. Get out from behind this vile defense, leave, enlighten the blind force of the new ruling class, ally yourself with it and fight.

Comrades, workers, you represent social thought which draws its origin from Labor. When one tells you to be anti-Jewish, one is not proposing "pogroms," for that is the means appropriate for the blind brutality of dominant classes. You are Thought, the wheel which moves history, the active social part which presses and rubs against the fixed social part represented by the ruling class. You are humane and identify yourself with humanity; you do not needlessly dirty yourself with the blood of your brothers. We are all brothers, but for particular reasons of historical development your Jewish brothers have, in the great majority, become corrupt. What can be morally said about a people who notoriously and continuously through centuries has lived off the labor of others, plundered its own, strangling while buying in order later to betray while reselling? What refuse of humanity can a people become who for centuries, from father to son, lived only to accumulate riches, invent the most adroit and immoral means to rob, betray

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and swindle its own? You will tell us that all capitalists act this way too, and you will be right. In England, especially, where capitalism is the elder, the capitalist is very close to the Jew, but in the rest of the world, the Jew has over the normal capitalist the "advantage" of atavistic qualities.

In Italy, especially, there never was a Jewish question, and we never knew effectively what a Jew was, even when with whip in hand you were made to work. Well, the German anti-Jewish movement, and later the Italian one, too, has drawn our attention; our eyes have been opened. All the veils are ripped to shreds. Under the good race, the courtesy, the humility and the servility of the Jew is hidden all the dirt that a people of thieves and money maniacs could accumulate with constant practice and for atavistic reasons.

In their search of gold, they have sacrificed all moral virtues. They have become the machiavellians of the blond metal. The end justifies the means, as long as they gather coins. They even lost all respect for themselves and for humanity in general. Incapable of pride, they are lost in pettiness, and the pettiness is so miserable that it is hard to believe they do it seriously, but they speculate even on that.

There is no need to go into further detail. It is enough that everyone observes and searches into their recollections.

We consider the Jews as victims, as social outcasts. They have succeeded in becoming an integral part of that dirty scum into which every ruling class transforms itself at the moment of its historical decline. With high-rollers, ruffians, and gamblers, they live the last historical moments of their social life.

We are, however, witnessing this historical decline, and the scum of a ruling class which is decomposing must not have contacts with the proletarian Antithesis. Especially, outside of the levers of control.

For us, the Jews represent an unhappy historical formation, rotten for atavistic reasons and also because of their practice in the organized exploitation of a society which is vulgarly exploitative. They should have no directing role, a role not made for them, in the New Society which shall have large, Fordian and non-speculative conceptions.

Maybe the conditions of Stalinism are worse than they should be really because of their wide scope. The Jew is accustomed to exploiting and not creating. It is logical that once placed at the levers of command, he very naturally glides toward forms of speculation and exploitation. The social synthesis has already rejected him from its bosom; workers, would you like to give him asylum, you? But you already gave him asylum for a long time. Chase him away.

We do not want to hurt our Jewish outcast brothers, we only want their redemption, and this redemption they will find only in work.

The Nazi and Fascist movements which, while not being Marxist, have however for a long time been by nature anti-capitalist, manifest in a sub-conscious manner their anticapitalism through their struggle against Israel. We Marxists can see more clearly by including anti-Judaism in anti-capitalism. This proves once more that proletarians and dictators are placed historically, one beside the other, in the struggle against capital. This proves that for years we have been fighting one another, spitting in each other's face, but for the same end. This proves that it is time to end this business and to recognize the identical role history is imposing on us and to die together if necessary.

We have laughed at racist theories, but Hitler was right, and there may be some one too intelligent, especially a Jew, who will want to laugh at us suddenly becoming anti-

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Jews, while remaining faithful disciples of Marx and Trotsky, both of whom were Jews! The fact is comical but in this historical moment everything is comical and at the same time extremely logical. It is comical that Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and the workers of the world hold hands, but it is extremely logical, it is a condition imposed by history without the possibility of beating around the bush. A new world is born, everything is clear and all sins are absolved.

We have considered the Jewish people as a group, as an actual economic formation and as an integral part of the enemy army. There are no rules without exceptions and we will make some. However, the proletarians should be careful not to fall into the trap of exceptions, such that exceptions are then transformed into rules. Proletarians should have no hatred for their neighbors, the Jewish workers, with whom they will be able, and even will have to be ready, to intermarry in order to regenerate them more rapidly and thus banish them from the face of the earth.

Sometimes history is really unjust; men know that, but one cannot act differently.

We respect and honor Marx and Trotsky and other obscure friends of the Jewish race. Some very beautiful flowers grow isolated on dung hills, but on the whole the Jewish people has become a pile of capitalist shit.

## LEONETTI-DEUTSCHER-RIZZI CORRESPONDENCE*

Rome, April 19, 1966

Dear Comrade [Deutscher],

In your *Le Prophéte hors la Loi*, p. 615, you cite Bruno Rizzi's, *La Bureaucratisation du Monde*, referring to *Rizzi* as an *Italian* ex-Trotskyist who published his book in *Paris*.

Actually, no one has ever known or knows Bruno Rizzi. Is it a pseudonym?

As for his book, my research at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris has failed to identify the publisher, establish the year of publication, or even ascertain the book's existence.

Would you be so kind as to provide me with some more precise references concerning both the author and his book? Thank you beforehand.

Will you come to Rimini again this Summer? Will my wife and I have the pleasure to see you in Rome?

With all my friendship, yours,

ALFONSO LEONETTI
(alias "Suzo")

London, April 22, 1966

Dear Comrade [Leonetti],

Here are the answers to your questions. I read Rizzi's pamphlet in Paris in 1939 — it had been given to me by some Jewish Trotskyists in whose circles at that time the pamphlet had been heatedly discussed. Trotsky has devoted to it a very important polemic. I have myself corresponded recently with Rizzi, who has sent me some of his

*Originally published in *Belfagor*, (May, 1979), pp. 337-340. Translated by Moishe Gonzales.



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writings in Italian, among which there is the pamphlet I have cited and which was published in Rome in 1962 by Opere Nuove (casella postale 211, Roma Centro). My correspondence with Rizzi has stopped because he has written me things so crazy that I seriously doubt his mental health. Among other things, he has described to me in detail the time he spent with Mussolini before he was executed, trying to convert *il Duce* to an altogether incoherent anarchism. For an Italian writer and historian, Rizzi could be a source of some value. Here is his address: Bruno Rizzi, Gargagnano, Gards. One more typical detail: without any provocation on my part, Rizzi has written me that I must be corrupt and even a totalitarian in my way of thinking because, like Marx and Trotsky, I am of Jewish origin. I have therefore decided to interrupt this curious exchange of opinions.

I am very sorry that I have not had so far the opportunity to come and visit you, but I have not given up hope. Unfortunately, this Summer we are not going to Italy.

With a sense of the greatest friendship for you and your wife,

Yours,

ISAAC DEUTSCHER

Rome, 22 April 1966 [*sic*]

Dear Comrade [Deutscher],

I thank you very much for your information concerning Rizzi. Evidently we are dealing with a "nut" — one of those nuts for which Italy is a very fertile ground. I'll try to locate the pamphlet in question in order to better understand the polemic by L.D., but I am not going to establish any contact with the author. As you can see, my way of thinking is more *totalitarian* than yours. Characters of this type are extremely annoying!

Too bad that you are not coming to Italy this Summer. But I still hope to see you soon.

My wife and I send you our best,

Yours,

ALFONSO LEONETTI

August 26, 1973

Dear Leonetti,[1]

I am sending you two pamphlets so that you can judge whether they are the work of a nut. I am deemed such according to Mr. Deutscher's opinion in a letter to you, parts of which you have allowed to be published precisely where he deals with me. I am not going to comment, but I hope that you will at least allow me to correct what is false. Unasked, D. wanted from me some bibliographical information, and he also asked what I thought before and after the last war, as well as now. Imagine that! I wrote a dozen volumes all dealing with issues of great sociological, historical and economic interest. In five or six letters I squeezed in as much as I could. Well, he sent them all back without my least understanding as to why. "Maybe he also thinks I am an anti-Semite," I thought. But no, he had been afraid that I wanted from him a biography and his disdain was such that he sent everything back. To you he wrote that he had broken all contacts because I was allegedly sick in the head. These letters you can read whenever you wish. Of course, for him, a philistine without any originality, they could appear as the works of the devil. He has never understood anything of the USSR, that

1. This letter was written in Bruno Rizzi's own handwriting in the opening page of his book, *Il Capitale, Vol. III del Socialismo dalla Religione alla Scienza,* (Bussolengo, Editrice Razionalista, 1970) sent as a gift to Leonetti.

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Deutscher. On the other hand, he knew how to write biographies, but I certainly did not need his help. Maybe you also would not want to remember what you have gone through. Sad things our biographies; Deutscher could have remained unemployed. But why do you let others read and publish such cowardly deeds?! Imagine if in Gargagnano I saw and spoke with Mussolini to convince him of an anarchist program or something of the sort! It was not enough for the gentleman Deutscher to call me a nut in order to hide his own childishness; but to also call me a liar! Mussolini was the prisoner of Scorzani and of the *Kriminalpolizei*. They read my letters and came to see me. I wanted to put out a newspaper until the arrival of the allies to explain to the workers what had become of the Italian Communist Party which they still thought had remained what it was in 1921. Naive, yes; fascist, no! And you know it. If the operation had worked the esteemed Italian Stalinists would have had a good excuse to do away with me as they did with Tresso. I wanted to tell the Italian workers what you also thought for many years of the Italian Communist Party, and only to prevent them from being screwed as they have in the last 28 years.

Regards

BRUNO RIZZI

N.B. And why did Deutscher send me the letters back? One does not send letters back to a nut. Maybe he wanted to humiliate me, because he knew that I was not a nut, but the coward wanted to make you believe it, and he found someone who would publicize the matter. Why? In Russia the Stalinists lock up in madhouses rebel intellectuals; in the West they expose them as nuts to public opinion. Have you come to this? I have always respected and appreciated you, and I have not been disparaging when you re-joined the party. Rather, I have come to visit you to see a dear comrade and to learn about what theoretical reasons had led you to this "crazy" *revirement*. You have not been able to tell me anything: only that "the Party is always right"! Precisely what we have questioned for some decades. But I did not disparage you, nor do I disparage you now by saying that you occasionally went off the deep end. I thought of it as a phenomenon of revolutionary senility. Having realized the uselessness of the struggle, you wanted to end in the environment in which you were practically born, and I understand you. In the meantime I keep on being called a nut and leave the judgment to future generations of revolutionaries. (B.R.)

# FALSE CRITERIA: THE *NEW CRITERION* OR THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF NEO-CONSERVATISM

## by Richard Wolin

It was inevitable that the neo-conservative reaction of the 1980s would spread from politics to culture. It has done this with a vengeance in the pages of *The New Criterion*, the journal of cultural criticism launched in September 1982 by Hilton Kramer, former art critic for the *New York Times*. The ideological slant of the journal was boldly enunciated

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with the very first number. "Standards," "values," and "morality" were to be preserved over against the onslaught of countervailing tendencies — in truth, tendencies that possessed different standards and values from Kramer and his obedient troop of self-appointed guardians of cultural purity. It is fascinating to encounter repeatedly the claim in the journal's pages that *its* criteria of aesthetic judgment are *non-ideological* — i.e., strictly aesthetic, hence pure — whereas the world of art criticism at large is sullied by vulgar ideologues, politicos, and irredeemable philistines.[1] *The New Criterion* has appeared on the scene, with the banner of righteousness held high, in order, in Kramer's words, to "distinguish achievement from failure, to identify and uphold a standard of quality, and to speak plainly and vigorously about the problems that beset the life of the arts and the life of the mind in our society." What is written in journals other than Mr. Kramer's own is blithely dismissed as "either hopelessly ignorant, deliberately obscurantist, commercially compromised, or politically motivated." Elsewhere, "criticism at every level . . . has almost everywhere degenerated into one or another form of ideology or publicity or some pernicious combination of the two."[2] It is indeed a night in which all cows are black.

The aesthetic values espoused in the pages of *The New Criterion* are woefully predictable and familiar. Frankly, there is nothing in the least "new" about the criteria that are repeatedly invoked by Kramer et al. The journal seeks to glorify a thoroughly conventional and eviscerated version of the modernist canon. Bourgeois 'high culture' is historically rehabilitated as an irrefragable repository of aesthetic integrity. Any deviations from this sacrosanct tradition of cultural achievement are pilloried with the zeal of a House committee. Unsurprisingly, all traces of so-called 'low' or 'popular' culture merit only the most relentless excoriation. The socio-historical conditions that result in the polarization between 'high' and 'low' culture — *viz*, the capitalist commodification of value, which compels the aesthetic sensibility to resort to increasingly rarefied and hermetic modes of expression in order to escape integration — remain entirely imperceptible in Kramer's account. Given his self-understanding as 'cultural critic,'[3] the acknowledgment that material factors of any sort could somehow interfere with the hallowed purity of the cultural sphere would be strictly inadmissible. Yet, as Walter Benjamin emphasized nearly fifty years ago, "the concept of culture, as the substantive concept of creations which are considered independent, if not from the production process in which they originate, then from a production process in which they continue to survive, carries a fetishistic trait. Culture appears in a reified form."[4]

Kramer's concerted attempt to separate culture entirely from the realm of material life reifies culture as a store of disembodied, eternal verities. Its immediate relationship to society, the life-world, and the formation and maturation of individual iden-

1. Kramer has unabashedly titled a collection of essays on the art scene over the last ten years *Revenge of the Philistines* (New York, 1985).

2. Hilton Kramer, "A Note on *The New Criterion*," *The New Criterion* (September, 1982), p. 1. Kramer's journal is funded by the "Foundation for Cultural Review," an organization whose name is suspiciously absent from the leading foundation indexes. The title, of course, represents an unsubtle variation of T.S. Eliot's journal *The Criterion*.

3. For the definitive unmasking of this category, see Theodor Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," *Prisms* (London, 1967), pp. 17-34.

4. Walter Benjamin, "Edmund Fuchs: Collector and Historian," *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, A. Arato and E. Gebhardt, eds., (New York, 1978), p. 233. In the same essay, Benjamin couples this claim with the oft-cited statement: "The products of art and science owe their existence not merely to the effort of the great geniuses that created them, but also to the unnamed drudgery of their contemporaries. There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."

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tities (in the sense of *Bildung*) is deceitfully occluded in favor of a crass belletristic boosterism. Insofar as it is shorn of its experiential substance as a formative influence on the life-processes of concrete individuals, culture is abstractly worshipped, resulting in the perpetuation of the "secular religion of art" (Benjamin's description of the 19th century *l'art pour l'art* movement). Paradoxically, the advent of secularized art in the modern era implies a definitive break with the concept of art as an object of religious veneration. Instead, implicit in the logic of cultural secularization, culminating in so-called 'autonomous art,' is a concomitant claim to the *democratization* of culture; a phenomenon Kramer and his cohorts, as confirmed elitists, view with dread, insofar as the advent of a truly democratic culture (as opposed to the administered Hollywood/Madison Avenue variant) would deprive them of their vaunted position of privilege. Here, it is not hard to glimpse the specter of (bourgeois) self-interest intruding upon the professed image of the disinterested aesthete.

Kramer insists repeatedly that *The New Criterion*'s standpoint is non-ideological and objective, in comparison with the rampant left-wing politicization of culture. As opposed to such tendencies, Kramer's journal identifies with the values of "expert intelligence," "connoisseurship that concentrates its principal interest on aesthetic quality," and a "cultural elitism that serves the public interest" — presumably by continuing to allow Kramer and his fellow cognoscenti to administer forcibly standards of taste.[5] However, if ideology may be defined as socially engendered false consciousness, it may be safely said that *The New Criterion* is copiously ideological. Rather than taking its claims to value-neutrality at face value, it is essential to understand the journal's timely appearance on the cultural scene as part of the larger socio-political phenomenon of neo-conservatism.

To be sure, *The New Criterion* has never attempted to conceal its partisanship for the conservative ideological shift and its politics, an admission that squares poorly with its condemnation of competing cultural tendencies as "ideological." The argument cuts both ways. Throughout its pages, the standard fare of neoconservative rhetoric is constantly reiterated. The absolute negative point of reference for the neoconservative school of historical falsification is, of course, the political turbulence of the 1960s. As Kramer remarks at one point, "We are still living in the aftermath of the insidious assault on mind that was one of the most repulsive features of the radical movement of the Sixties. The cultural consequences of this leftward turn in our political life has been far graver than commonly supposed. In everything from the writing of textbooks to the reviewing of trade books, from the introduction of Kitsch into museums to the decline of literacy in the schools to the corruption of scholarly research, the effect on the life of culture has been ongoing and catastrophic."[6] After six years of Reaganism, the moral majority, Meese's attack on the judiciary, and William Bennett's straight-laced educational traditionalism, one would expect that Kramer's words had been written in 1972 rather than over a decade later. Curiously, not a word is written about right-wing Kitsch: *Red Dawn*, *Rambo*, *Rocky IV*. Moreover, it is pure duplicity to pretend that Kitsch is somehow a product of the 1960s. The concept derives from German cultural debates of the 1920s, whereas the phenomenon itself can be traced to the separation of 'high' and 'low' art at the close of the eighteenth century. The politicization of life in the sixties becomes the radical evil universally responsible for all subsequent cultural failings (with the possible exception of the periodic breakdowns of the New York sub-

5. Kramer, "T.J. Clark and the Marxist Critique of Modern Painting," *The New Criterion* (March, 1985), pp. 1-2.

6. Kramer, "A Note on *The New Criterion*," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

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way system). It is clear that the specter of an informed and politically active citizenry, unwilling to stomach a plebiscitary democracy in which professional politicians unresponsive to the wills of their constituencies reign, constitutes a potentially devastating threat to an elitist philosophy of politics and culture, which requires instead a quiescent and pliable public. What is important to note here is that the clear neoconservative preference for government by elites conflicts with the pseudo-populism of its rhetoric, in which the evils of "big government" and "rule from Washington" are lamented. In truth, the much heralded "new federalism" or political decentralization turns out to be merely a political ploy intended to eliminate social services and programs that doubtlessly the states themselves will be unable to fund.

When it comes to following other aspects of neoconservative dogma, *The New Criterion* falls dutifully in line. In his book on the subject, Peter Steinfels describes one of the key elements of the neoconservative world-view as follows: "The current crisis is primarily a cultural crisis, a matter of values, morals, and manners. Though this crisis has causes and consequences on the level of socioeconomic structures, neoconservatism, unlike the Left, tends to think these have performed well. The problem is that our convictions have gone slack, our morals loose, our manners corrupt."[7] Of course, this account coincides very well with the aforementioned appeal to "standards of quality" and the "values of high art," the purported *raison d'etre* of *The New Criterion.* As Kramer at one point pontificates: "It is time to apply a new criterion to the discussion of our cultural life — a criterion of truth."[8] Not only does one find in the journal's pages the predictable paeans to the values of high culture, but implicit endorsements of the cultural policies of the current administration in Washington. Unsurprisingly, public funding for the arts comes under heavy attack, and the 'private sector' is typically viewed as the panacea for cultural as well as social problems. To be sure, public funding of the arts is an issue fraught with potentially grave political difficulties. Ultimately, it fosters a regression behind the democratization of art achieved in the 18th century, in the form of a restoration of the constraints of artistic patronage. At the same time, when the potential for artistic democratization — i.e., the freeing of individual artists from the constraints of traditional authority, be it courtly or religious — is negated by the subjection of all art to the requisites of the commodity form — the requisites of the market and salability — judicious employment of public funds to shelter artists temporarily from the vicissitudes of the market has much to commend it.

But it is clear that despite his pretensions to the contrary, the real motive behind Kramer's scorn for public support of the arts is ideological: in his view, the arts tend to be dominated by unpatriotic leftists, and eliminating public funding for the arts is the best way to insure that they are purged. Such displays of political paranoia have become only too typical of the neoconservative mentality, and comparable examples abound in *The New Criterion.* The more one reads, the more one realizes that the mission of *The New Criterion* in fact has little to do with promoting some nebulous ideal of cultural excellence. Instead (and this is perhaps true above all of Kramer's contributions), the main preoccupation of the journal seems to be that of settling old political scores. "The truth is, it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a serious conservative writer to win a major literary prize in this country today," laments Kramer at one point.[9] Little does he realize his observation, if correct,

7. Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives* (New York, 1979), p. 55.
8. Kramer, "A Note on *The New Criterion*," *op. cit.*, p. 4.
9. Kramer, "Professor Howe's Prescriptions," *The New Criterion* (April, 1984), p. 4.

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likely says more about the paucity of the "conservative imagination" than any fabled left-wing conspiracy.

As might be expected, *The New Criterion* 'line' on higher education and the humanities is vintage William Bennett — with a generous dose of Accuracy in Academia thrown in for good measure. Like the authoritarian personality of old, the neoconservative mentality has little tolerance for ambiguity. The enemy must be identified quickly, accurately, then presumably rooted out. "There are three movements at work in American humanities departments which have replaced, or soon will replace, the ethos of the liberal humanists of my generation," observes Norman Cantor in an article entitled "The Real Crisis in the Humanities Today."[10] "These are Marxism, feminism, and the methodologies of structuralism and deconstruction. It is to these three movements and their ideological implications that we must turn for a real understanding of the crisis of the humanities today." What follows is, in no uncertain terms, an academic "hit list" fully in the spirit of AIA.[11] The historians Lawrence Stone and Eugene Genovese must be given close scrutiny. Stone, the former head of the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton, possesses "extensive patronage powers in the historical profession. Similarly, Genovese's appointment at Rochester gave him an influential position in the academic establishment." One must be especially wary of the pseudo-humanistic "Western Marxism" which attempts to "reintroduce idealism into the Marxist system" and whose central tenet is that of "cultural mediation." "Critical theory," we surprisingly learn, "is now an integral part of the American university curriculum." Also ranking high on the hit list are Marxist humanist scholars Martin Jay, Mark Poster, Eugene Lunn, and Fredric Jameson, insofar as "their work in intellectual history or literary criticism has taken the place, for many bright students in the humanities, of the liberal-humanist scholarship that characterized the 1960s." Journals such as *Social Text*, *October*, and *Telos* also must be carefully monitored. It is indeed curious that it never occurs to Accuracy in Academia and its neo-McCarthyite sympathizers (today, wreaking havoc under the shibboleths of "liberal humanism" and "academic excellence") that from the standpoint of their acute paranoia concerning the "red threat" to the American way of life, the academicization of Marxism in recent years is a positive phenomenon: what more innocuous locus could be found for Marxism than the ivory towers of academe?

Cantor goes on to proffer similar woefully reductive accounts of feminism and structuralism/poststructuralism (which he confuses). The level of exposition is about that of a college freshman, and one rapidly begins to suspect that this is the general intellectual level of *New Criterion* readers. The lesson of all this is that humanism is as humanism does: it is a meaningless abstraction unless its content is well specified, and in lieu of such specification, it is fully compatible with significant levels of social intolerance and discrimination.

Of course, the claim that left-wing intellectuals have fostered hedonistic and indulgent lifestyles which have plunged the moral fiber of the American way of life into a murky abyss is a longstanding kernel of neoconservative mythology, also known as the "new class" thesis. A much discussed term in recent sociological literature,[12] the new

10. *The New Criterion* (June, 1985), p. 30.

11. Ferreting out left-wing influence in the academy is also one of Kramer's favorite pastimes. Art historian T.J. Clark and *Dissent* editor Irving Howe are two of his favorite targets. For a defense of Howe in the face of Kramer's jaundiced attacks, see Robert Boyers, "The Neo-Conservatives and Culture," *Salmagundi* 66 (Winter-Spring, 1985), pp. 192-204.

12. See, for example, Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York, 1979); Daniel Bell, "The New Class: A Muddled Concept," *The Winding Passage* (New

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class refers to the growing stratum of intellectuals who now find themselves in positions of economic and political power, bolstered by the advent of a technologically oriented "society of information." The claim that this extremely loose and ill-defined group of individuals can be said to constitute anything resembling a unified "class" (its membership, the bearers of "cultural capital" in Gouldner's words, ranges from university professors to corporate executives to computer programmers) seems highly problematical. On the other hand, the argument that its members' habits of consumption can be defined as narcissistic and self-indulgent (in its most extreme variant, the so-called "yuppie" phenomenon) would seem accurate. Ironically, it is precisely the alacrity with which this group participates in lifestyles centering around conspicuous consumption that would seem to disqualify it as the subversive "adversary culture" it is portrayed as being in neoconservative lore. One could hardly refer to the new class, however loosely defined, as a repository of radical "post-materialist values"[13] given such conformist habits of consumption. Moreover, the interests it might possess in "self-actualization" — one of the distinguishing traits of a post-materialist value orientation according to Inglehart — are usually satisfied by a variety of fad-like trends in the "pop" psychology movement, which facilitate narcissistic withdrawal rather than active political contestation.

The attempt by Kramer and his *New Criterion* cohorts to blame a hedonistic counterculture for depleting the moral foundations of the late capitalist society is another standard component of neoconservative conventional wisdom. Yet, when emanating from a source like *The New Criterion* this claim is doubly incoherent. As set forth in its original and most sophisticated version, Daniel Bell's 1976 work *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, the thesis holds that there is a structural incompatibility between, on the one hand, the achievement mentality of capitalism, based on the ethos of rational forbearance embodied in the Protestant ethic, and, on the other hand, the values of the cultural sphere, which promote an interest in sensual fulfillment, immediate experience, and expressive (rather than goal-oriented) subjectivity. The problems with this analytical scheme are primarily two-fold. Firstly, the unquenchable desire for "new" or "lived" experience characteristic of cultural modernism cannot be so neatly detached from the defining features of the sphere of economic action: the ceaseless dynamism that necessitates the dismantling of all traditional ways of life, the disruption of all fixed values and norms, the obsessive concern with "progress" and "development" at all costs — in sum, the entrepreneurial ethos of Faustian striving in which "All that is solid melts into air" (Marx).[14] In all these respects, the dynamism of cultural modernism — its unceasing quest for the "new" — merely parallels the dynamism of modernity as a sociological phenomenon. Yet, the major peril of Bell's argument is that it risks falling victim to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness or a confusion of cause and effect. The confusion lies in the fact that the cultural sphere is unfairly condemned for its salutary attempt to provide the values of sensuousness and fulfillment that the capitalist reduction of persons to the status of *homo oeconomicus* systematically denies. Also, the economic transition (circa the 1930s) from a *society of pro-*

York 1979); and with reference to Eastern European societies, Georg Konrad and Ivan Szeleny, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York, 1979). For Steinfels' discussion of the role played by the new class thesis in neoconservative ideology, see *The Neoconservatives*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58, 285-290.

13. For an elaboration of this concept, cf. Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution* (Princeton, 1977).

14. Also the title of a book by Marshall Berman (New York, 1982) dealing with kindred themes.

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*duction* to a *society of consumption* is occluded in this account — whereas it is precisely this transition that fosters an ethos of consumer indulgence which ultimately proves fatal to the Protestant ethic of austerity and self-renunciation. Hence, in all these respects, the cultural sphere is unfairly held liable for the advent of a profligate consumer ethos that itself proved a crucial element in the stabilization of capitalism after the crisis of overproduction in 1929. For the administratively engendered demand for consumer goods is intended to offset future crises of overproduction.[15]

Kramer's account of the way in which the cultural sphere under capitalism undermines the motivational foundations of the economic sector — an argument of course which ultimately paves the way for the intolerance of the "think right, live right" mentality characteristic of neoconservative moral rigorism — is misleading and duplicitous in comparison with Bell's. Because Kramer would like to save twentieth century modernism — for him, the absolute touchstone of aesthetic value — from being the least implicated in the century's socio-political turmoil, he refuses to admit any linkages between the counterculture of the 1960s and modernist sensibility in general. Instead, he is forced to hold sixties radicalism exclusively accountable for what he and his neoconservative brethren view as the contemporary moral laxness, a great distortion of historical fact. Bell's account is much more honest insofar as it views the counterculture as merely one in a series of modernist assaults against the hypocrisy, superficiality, and repression characteristic of the materialistic culture of capitalism. To be sure, the very notion of a "counterculture" must be traced back at least as far as the Paris of Baudelaire and the advent of "Bohemianism" as an oppositional lifestyle. Its values are inseparable from those of seminal historical precursors such as the "Decadents" of the 1880s — one thinks above all of Huysman's *A Rebour* (1884) — Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism as the tendency for all dominant values to devaluate themselves, and the surrealist attempt to magically transform everyday life into a vehicle for the experience of "profane illuminations."[16]

Kramer's appreciation of the modernist legacy is thus misleading insofar as it seeks to preserve a modernism shorn of its radical sensibilities. The iconoclastic thrust of the modernist heritage is neutered and domesticated in his account. By employing the overarching concept of "modernism" to refer to both the literary modernism of Joyce, Proust, Woolf, Kafka, etc., as well as to the revolutionary energies of the historical avant-garde — dadaism, futurism, expressionism, and surrealism — (which, as Peter Bürger has shown, was less concerned with creating new literary or artistic "styles" than in challenging the bourgeois "institution of art" in its entirety) Kramer blurs a number of crucial differences between these two currents. The result is the creation of

15. For the economic background to this argument, see Giacomo Marramao, "Theory of the Crisis and the Problem of Constitution," *Telos* 26 (Winter, 1975-76), pp. 143-164. In all fairness to Bell, it should be acknowledged that in a more recent essay, he seems to have slightly altered his position on the relation between culture and the economic sphere. In "The New Class: A Muddled Concept," he remarks: "the machine of modern capitalism assimilated and commercialized these (countercultural) lifestyles. Without this hedonism created by mass consumption, the consumer goods industry would collapse. The cultural contradiction of capitalism ultimately amounts to the following: once capitalism lost its original legitimations, it adopted the legitimations of a formerly anti-bourgeois culture in order to maintain the stability of its own economic institutions." Cf. *The Winding Passage*, *op. cit.*, p. 163ff. For a classical treatment of the historical transition from a society of production to a society of consumption viewed through the prism of changing images of success in popular biographies, cf. Leo Lowenthal, "The Triumph of Mass Idols," *Literature, Popular Culture and Society* (Palo Alto, 1961), pp. 109-140.

16. For more on both "bohemianism" and "decadence" as nineteenth century avant-garde currents, see Matei Calinescu, *Faces of the Avant-garde* (Bloomington, 1977).

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the homogeneous and aesthetically pure modernist canon in which the real social challenges posed by the modernist/avant-garde legacy to the institutional bases of the established social order evaporate in a cloud of aestheticist affirmation. In Kramer's framework, the entire modernist heritage is viewed as a single, undifferentiated continuum — fundamentally, an extension of art for art's sake. As a result, what is lost sight of is the fact that with the emergence of the historical avant-garde in the early twentieth century, allegiance to the aestheticist credo of *l'art pour l'art* — art as the realm of "beautiful illusion" — becomes insupportable to artists on a vast scale given the pressing nature of the European cultural crisis leading up to and precipitating World War I. Because Kramer insists upon viewing art strictly in *intra-aesthetic* terms, excluding all wider social and cultural mediations, he remains incapable of appreciating the extent to which art overlaps positively with other spheres of life, thereby actively influencing, defamiliarizing, and challenging conventional world-views.

Kramer's aesthetic canon of orthodox high modernism offers little that is surprising or controversial. He reveres Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, on the one hand, the abstract expressionists Gorky, Rothko, and Motherwell on the other. He is notably hostile toward virtually all artistic tendencies that post-date abstract expressionism. Unsurprisingly, all postmodernist trends become a privileged object of scorn. Kramer is well aware of the phenomenon of the "routinization of the avant-garde": the fact that a once adversarial culture has become fully integrated in and accepted by the very bourgeois society it once so vehemently opposed. Yet, the conclusions he draws from this realization are strangely inconsistent. For in the last analysis the inner contradictions of modernism that lead to its assimilation and rejection by the so-called postmodernists remain for him untroubling facts: its stylistic inaccessibility, elitist self-understanding, implicit neglect of questions of content, etc. The demise of a renegade modernist culture is consequently not merely a testament to the capacities of the bourgeois social order to assimilate "difference," but also suggests elements of modernism's own intrinsic failings.[17] Yet, since Kramer seems unwilling to address the possible shortcomings of modernism, his perspective is vitiated by a bad historicism: he remains a partisan of modernism "the way it really was," i.e., as a fossilized object of historical veneration. As he states at one point after having already acknowledged modernism's social integration in recent years: "Yet modernism, though now stripped of the nearly absolute authority it formerly wielded in artistic matters, is anything but dead. It survives as a vital tradition — the only real vital tradition that the art of our time can claim as its own. The revenge of the philistines is anything but complete."[18] What Kramer fails to recognize is that any discussion of the modern as a "tradition" — even as a "vital tradition" — remains a contradiction in terms, since one of the most fundamental characteristics of the modern in general is to be *antithetical to all tradition.* Once the modern has become something traditional, as it does in Kramer's hands, it has lost the battle, as it were. This conclusion hardly implies that an uncritical advocacy of postmodernism would somehow provide the solution to the problem of modernism's decline. Instead, precisely the opposite reaction to postmodernist trends would likely prove more correct.[19] However, this should not obviate the obligation of

17. For more on the failings of modernism, see Russell Berman, "Modern Art and Desublimation," *Telos* 62 (Winter, 1984-85), pp. 31-57.

18. Kramer, "Postmodernism: Art and Culture in the 1980s," *The New Criterion* (September, 1983), p. 43.

19. Cf. Richard Wolin, "Modernism vs. Postmodernism," *Telos* 62 (Winter, 1984-85), pp. 9-29.

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intellectuals and artists to think through the failings of modernism, rather than regress to "traditional" modernist values in a moment of cultural panic and insecurity.

The problem with Kramer's approach is that it is both belletristic and affirmative. The socially critical component of the aesthetic sphere, which is one of its central *raisons d'etre* — i.e., its capacity to negate the world of facticity as such and thereby provide alternative universes of discourse — is wholly eclipsed in such a perspective. Art is instead reduced to the level of an innocuous, self-referential plaything suitable for the enjoyment of elites. When limited to its affirmative function, art is assigned the role of providing illusory images of transcendence, in compensation for the failings and deficiencies of this worldly existence. Kramer believes that by artificially elevating art to the rarefied sphere of "eternal cultural values" fit for consumption by the few, he can thereby remove all suspicion in the aesthetic realm of ideological taint. The irony is that Kramer thereby only compounds the problem: in fact, in his schema art is all the more reduced to a type of "socially engendered false consciousness," insofar as it is explicitly entrusted with the mission of providing a deceptive semblance of reconciliation over against existing social contradictions. By glossing over social antagonisms with a duplicitous veneer of harmony and well-being, art becomes fully ideological. Even at the zenith of aesthetic affirmation in the halcyon days of *l'art pour l'art*, a moment of protest against a false social totality was registered in the "beautiful illusion" which contained a *promesse de bonheur*: the promise of a better world which, in salutary contrast to the indigent state of the existing one, served as a powerful indictment of the latter's deficiencies. But since Kramer bypasses the potentially *critical* moment of aesthetic semblance, in his account one is left with nothing but art as rank consolation for the shortcomings of the material world — that is, the content of art is reduced to that of sheer diversion.

Here a bitter irony enters into the picture. For Kramer's avowed mission all along has been to redeem art from the baser domain of low culture, to be the savior of high art from the clutches of "philistines" and "kitsch." Yet, because he proves so averse to considering the cognitive or social dimensions of aesthetic experience, all he is left with is a conception of art as a variety of "kitsch" — a conclusion that is fully implicit in his image of art as a "diversion" from the realm of material interests; albeit, "high diversion." Kramer's version of art appreciation in substance returns aesthetics to the sphere of the culinary or banausic. In his hands high art becomes merely the flip side of culture industry pap. It becomes an object of consumption for cultural elites, but an object of consumption nevertheless. This debasement of art to the status of an object of cultural consumption echoes clearly in Kramer's employment of the category of "connoisseurship,"[20] which in its present-day usage is inseparable from its associations with the culinary sphere. Moreover, in Kramer's conception of the art critic as connoisseur, the tainted origins of bourgeois criticism — i.e., its nineteenth century links to the realm of commodity consumption — are clearly discernible: the idea of the critic as a "purveyor of cultural goods," who assists consumers to discriminate in their choice of the available cultural commodities. The elitist critic who fancies himself above the fray of rampant commodification is ultimately shown to be fully in league with it. He deceives by asserting that his precious judgments are somehow of suprahistorical origin — hence, "non-ideological" and sovereign — when in fact they are, like all "social facts," thoroughly mediated by the values of the reigning social totality.

20. Cf. Kramer, "T.J. Clark and the Marxist Critique of Modern Painting," *The New Criterion* (March, 1985), pp. 1-2.

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As Adorno has remarked of such cultural critics: "The prerogatives of information and position permit them to express their opinion as if it were objectivity. But it is solely the objectivity of the ruling mind. They help to weave the veil . . . . If cultural criticism, even at its best with Valéry, sides with conservatism, it is because of its unconscious adherence to a notion of culture, which, during the era of late capitalism, aims at a form of property which is stable and independent of stock-market fluctuations."[21]

But perhaps the greatest deficiency of affirmative cultural criticism is its shameless fetishization of the category of culture itself: i.e., its treatment of culture as a self-subsistent entity, divorced from the real life-process of society in general. In point of fact, culture is of value only when it remains true to its implicit critical capacities (Sartre once said that it would be impossible to produce a good novel in praise of fascism). Whatever independence it retains *vis-à-vis* the social matrix from which it emanates allows it the requisite breathing-space to view society with critical acumen, rather than to turn its back on society in the facile celebration of a realm of other-worldly, eternal verities. Instead, it is precisely when viewed *sub specium aeternis* that culture becomes in truth ideological, i.e., the window-dressing that lends a false veil of humanity to an otherwise inhumane society. What becomes unconscionable about affirmative cultural criticism is that, "Where there is despair and measureless misery, [the cultural critic] sees only spiritual phenomena, the state of man's consciousness, the decline of norms."[22] In this conception of the mission of criticism culture is degraded to the level of high-bow consolation for the anguish of worldly suffering — *divertissement* for sophisticates; a view which is only a hair's breadth removed from the "connoisseurship" for symphonies of "serious music" displayed by Nazi concentration camp administrators after a busy day of stoking the ovens.

It is to precisely such circumstances that Adorno alluded when he reflected on the possibilities of writing poetry in good conscience after Auschwitz: after the holocaust would not every trace of affirmative sentiment be inherently guilty of providing false consolation? However, he was quick to point out in almost the same breath that to despair of all cultural possibilities would in the end be tantamount to ceding to the forces of barbarism whose influence it falls due to culture ideally to offset. It is precisely for such reasons that the concept of culture must be saved from the clutches of Kramer and his ilk.

21. Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *Prisms*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 22.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

# THE MISSED MEETING — A CONFERENCE REPORT ON FRENCH AND GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

## by Rainer Rochlitz*

From the 20th to the 22nd of February, 1986, several of Germany's most important philosophers met in Paris with a number of their equally renowned French colleagues.

*Translated by Thomas R. Thorp.

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Habermas attended the first day's debate, but did not participate, forfeiting his role to Apel and Wellmer. Foucault's death and Lyotard's last minute cancellation left Derrida as the chief spokesman for the French side.

The meeting actually did take place. That, however, was the extent of its success. Expectedly, it quickly ran aground. The hoped-for dialogue between two groups which have been unable to hear each other never materialized. After the opening evening and an afternoon session the next day, the Germans found themselves alone and quite perplexed. On the third day they met with a group of French with whom they could converse as easily as with most Americans or Italians. But those French with whom they had sought a dialogue had disappeared. Here are several reasons for the failure.

The lack of any meaningful dialogue was the fault of both sides: the Germans felt that it was the form of discourse that ruled out discussion, whereas, for the French, it was a question of its very ground. One could illustrate this stalemate with the two extreme examples of Apel and Derrida. Apel wanted to convince the French of the incontrovertible character of his theory of communication as consensus. He criticized the French for their "irrationalism," referring specifically to the very form of "irrationalism" defended by Heidegger, and which Apel himself had courted at the beginning of his career. Apel's proposals were unacceptable to Derrida who labeled this attitude "scandalous." In fact, to Derrida, Apel's approach seemed to contradict the very idea of communication. Apel presumably neglected a fundamental rule of his own ethic: "the idealized exchange of roles," i.e., the attempt to put oneself into the place of the other. Apel had not come to learn, said Derrida, but to teach the truth. This sort of a symmetry is fatal to any discussion and it was not surprising that Apel's presentation did not generate any fundamental philosophical response.

Derrida could do nothing more than to reiterate that no discussion would be possible under these conditions. He pointed out that: 1) the words used did not have the same meaning on both sides of the Rhine; 2) the Germans had come with preconceived ideas and general labels: post-structuralism, post-modernity, irrationalism; 3) the German reading of Heidegger was simply inadequate. Far from being an irrationalist, Heidegger, in fact, questions reason; he rejects the labels rationalism and irrationalism — both of which appeared in the 17th century. In reference to the reproach that Heideggerians tend to forget Heidegger's role during National Socialism, Derrida ironically admitted that he "had thought about it." His relation to Heidegger, he insisted, is not simply naive but simultaneously receptive and critical.[1]

All in all, contemporary German discussion of rationality is, to Derrida's way of thinking, a non-critical return to classical theories; i.e., "pre-Heideggerian." Still recuperating from the trauma of National Socialism, the Germans seek to immunize themselves against irrationalism with a celebration of rationality. Yet, their rationalism is essentially irrational. France has not gone this route and its thinking has not been pre-shaped by a privileged rationality. This discussion of rationality manages to be simultaneously trivial and threatened by what in it remains unthought. The issue is, rather, one of reflecting on the very conditions for such a discourse and its less than evident motivations.

The ineluctable crux of the debate was clearly to be found in Heidegger. In fact, both Apel's and Derrida's thought emerge from the context of that philosophy. Each

1. Derrida in fact had lectured in 1983 on Heidegger's Inaugural Address with reference to the speeches he made as Rector of the University at Freiberg under the Nazis. These lectures have not yet been published.

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developed a critical position with regard to the master, but in an inverse sense, with the sole common point being a rejection of the political consequences of his thought. Derrida sought to point out that the thought of Being remains metaphysical to the extent that it fails to think both the trace and writing, which would be more fundamental than Being. Derrida is thus able to radicalize Heidegger's thought by following the very path of German philosophy. He broadly extends philosophical reflection to cover the constitution of meaning, and he abstracts from its status in ordinary language where meaning as 'common sense' is always already established in a network of critical attitudes. This is what weds meaning to the pragmatic and intersubjective dimension of language, and this is what Derrida brackets out. The debate between Derrida and Searle made it clear that Derrida trivializes intersubjective validity which he sees only as a membrane of social and, ultimately, unreal conventions. For him it is the sphere of dead metaphor. Only transgressive writing, the collision of meaning and non-meaning, satisfies this desire for subversive creation — a desire which society opposes.

In Apel's case, the dimension of meaning and of non-meaning is trivial. As far as Apel is concerned, that question is one of mere contingency. As a result, the emphasis is entirely on intersubjective validity, truth and ethical judgment. Consequently, there is not the slightest common ground for discussion between Apel and Derrida. According to Apel, nearly all of the Derridean field of reflection is contingent; whereas, for Derrida, Apel's field of concerns consists in conventional *techné*, in *Gestell*: the mask of the western will to power. This is why Apel tried in vain to draw Derrida onto his ground: into a discussion of discursive validity. Derrida, for his part, unconditionally refused to enter into a debate of those arguments proposed by Apel which he felt were nothing short of an act of aggression against what is most vital: the aesthetic dimension of writing. In so doing, Derrida claimed that the conditions for discussion were not given: Apel simply had not read Heidegger and his knowledge of Derrida's work was inadequate.

Around the edges of this ideal and typical polarization two other positions developed on the German side, one other on the French side. Once again, to situate these different positions one has to begin with Heidegger.

In spite of its undeniable dominance since the sixties, it is not now — nor was it ever — entirely accurate to describe current French philosophy solely with reference to its Nietzschian and Heideggerian currents. Mention also needs to be made of the resurgence of transcendental philosophy. Less well represented during the colloquium, this new tendency is interesting in its own right and because it traces back to Habermas.

Beginning with a close re-reading of the German Idealism of Kant, Fichte and the young Hegel, this philosophy first of all has attempted to rebuke the dominant Heideggerian position in France. It opposes to the Heideggerian and Derridean deconstruction of metaphysics a reading which does not purely and simply reject metaphysical ideas but assigns them a regulative status in aesthetics and politics as in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Law*. The center of this theory is constituted by Kant's theory of the schematism. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut consider this a definitive response to the Heideggerian analysis of *Dasein*. The schematism explains the temporalization and particularization of general categories. This schematizing activity is taken to be the essence of rationality.[2]

In spite of a complete lack of reflection on language, this Kantian and Fichtian

2. See the last chapter of their *La Pensée 68. Essais sur l'Anti-humanisme Contemporaine*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

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inspired thought — a monological philosophy of the subject and of consciousness which assigns a merely juridical standing to intersubjectivity — has presented itself as Habermasian. On the basis of this claim, Habermas is himself often perceived in France as a neo-Kantian thinker. In reality, Habermas' thought is by no means a transcendental philosophy in the classical sense. His recent theory of communicative action develops a dialogical notion of intersubjectivity which locates reason in validity claims present in speech acts and similar actions. On the other hand, in *Knowledge and Human Interest* Habermas had proposed a Fichtian theory of knowledge and this is why the young French Fichtians referred to him.

Encouraged by French philosophy, a group of young German philosophers have rediscovered a positive relation to Heidegger. Some of Gadamer's students such as Manfred Frank and Rudiger Bubner, drawing directly from a Heideggerian tradition still alive in Germany, have suggested that a Heideggerian critique of reason remains important. Apel's and Habermas' positions do not satisfy them. Yet, they have attempted to develop — in a distinctly un-Heideggerian move — a positive conceptualization of the Subject and of rational argumentation. In this regard, Frank attempts to reconcile this demand with the idea of an absolute singularity that he finds in Derrida. But in labeling Derrida a "post-structuralist," he rules out all dialogue with the French philosopher he so admires.

Other Germans have gone further in the direction of Heidegger and Derrida or Foucault. They have adopted the radical critique of reason carried out in the name of the fundamental metaphoricity of language and of a phenomenological motive that remains unsatisfied by Apel's pure and simple reflection. This is Sloterdijk's and Bahr's position. Like Derrida, they find in Heidegger a poetic critique of instrumental rationality reduced to its cognitive dimension. As opposed to Apel and Habermas, they are reclaiming the phenomenological wealth of French thought.

The third position would be that of Habermas, Wellmer and Honneth. By his refusal to participate in the debate which he nevertheless attended as a spectator, Habermas gave the impression that he agreed with Derrida that the conditions for a true discussion simply were not there. Maybe he was waiting for a French reading of his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.*

During the actual discussions, Wellmer defended Habermas' position or, at least, one quite similar. Wellmer's position was two-fold. First, he focused on those aspects of French thought which agreed with the critique of instrumental rationality and logocentrism. From this viewpoint, he defended Derrida's position against Frank on the question of the critique of the philosophy of the Subject. Wellmer also seemed somewhat sympathetic toward the French preoccupation with exploring aesthetics and their emphasis on the contextual character of all argumentation. On the other hand, as soon as he was confronted with the radical consequences of this French thought: its rejection of the dimension of validity, of theoretical truth, ethical judgment, the identification of validity claims and will to power, he responded that the concept of truth ought not to be defined by consensus. He rejoined Apel's position, warning about the possibility of backsliding into irrationalism and all related catastrophic political consequences implied by the French view. In his book, *The Dialectic of Modernism and Post-Modernism*, Wellmer had made important concessions to Lyotard. He even went so far as to adopt the notion of the "*grand récit*" to designate Habermas' thought.

Actually, like most German philosophers, Wellmer has difficulty understanding the stature of Heideggerian thought in France. Thinkers such as Derrida, who have reintro-

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duced the Heideggerian critique of reason, have not assumed an overtly irrationalist position. In the first place, they use rationality to subvert reason. On the other hand, it is necessary to distinguish in their work a nocturnal from a diurnal face. The nocturnal face is that of a radical subversion which is not ontological but aesthetic in the Nietzschian sense. This would be the encounter of meaning and non-meaning as the trace and the unrecoverable origin. The diurnal face is a civilized overture to rational communication, perhaps even less monological than in Apel's case, a political engagement for human rights and freedom of expression, an engagement for the aesthetic of a radical modernity exemplified in the tradition from Mallarmé to Paul Celan. This philosophy is no fundamental ontology attacking reason in its totality. What is at stake is the thought of an imaginative transgression which presupposes a functioning democratic society and philosophical discussion.

In his last book, Wellmer observed that the rationality of modern democracy could be interpreted as a "second nature" which does not presuppose a notion of truth as consensual. One could apply this to Derrida's thought. And, yet, what pushes Wellmer to Apel when confronted with manifest irrationality and performative contradictions (i.e., the claim of the negation of the consensus theory of truth which, by that very fact, claims a consensus concerning the negation) is, without a doubt, the fear of seeing Derridean thinking become, in Germany, a fundamental ontology which questions the positive achievements of reason and democratic debate. But perhaps German democracy is today sufficiently solid to be able to support such a Heideggerian and French-inspired subversive aesthetic. Habermas does not seem very far from this when he brings together Derrida and Adorno in his recent *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*.

What appears possible is a philosophy of rationality comprehensive enough to learn from French philosophy while assimilating its rational elements. This is what Habermas seems to have begun to do with regard to Foucault and Castoriadis. From the paradigmatically French preoccupation with the notion of the body as vulnerable and capable of *jouissance*, from the horizon of meaning, from the semantic innovation and the fundamental non-sense which lies in wait for every creation of meaning, it should be possible to extract a theory of aesthetic rationality. At this level, Habermas' and Wellmer's thought intersects with the work of Paul Ricoeur who has also endeavored to bring to light the rational elements of French Heideggerianism. The theory of cognitive and moral evolution can be completed by a narrative theory of the horizons of meaning, of the efforts towards its realization, of its wanderings and its failures, of the constitution of particular identities in real history and in the arts.

## THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN POLAND

### by Andrzej J. Bloch

Paradox has characterized Poland for the past forty years. Co-existence of the state and the private sectors is one of the most blatant of these paradoxes. Yet, while domination of agriculture by family-owned farms is largely a consequence of Poland's

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heritage, private activity in the manufacturing and service industry is a more recent result of inefficient performance by the state industries. The failures of the martial law government's economic policies have had their own paradoxical result: the self-appointed representatives of restabilization and orthodoxy end up promoting not only domestic private economic activity, but also foreign-owned private enterprises which then are presented as models of efficient organization and flexible operation.

In Eastern Europe economic reform necessarily challenges a monopoly of social control and accumulated privileges. But there are also strictly economic limits to the perpetuation of centralized state control, as the case of Poland amply demonstrates. Each wave of social unrest in Poland has been triggered initially by economic failures which then became politicized, as it became obvious that such failings were systemic rather than simply faulty applications of an otherwise viable model. The military government, more than its predecessors, has placed expediency above ideological purity. Yet, the Polish economy, particularly the state sector, has shown no signs of overcoming its structural crisis. To protect itself against the real and imagined frustration of a working class known for its restlessness, the government has encouraged expansion of the private sector well beyond traditional limits.

The private sector, as an integral part of the Polish economy, became a reality with the end of the Stalinist period in 1956. Continuous attempts to collectivize agriculture from the early 1950s on failed with a political victory of Gomulka's moderate faction of the Communist party. "Collectivized" farmers were able to repossess their land. The result is that presently about 75 to 80% of land in Poland is cultivated by individual farmers. The remaining 20 to 25% is in the hands of both state owned and co-operative farms.

After WWII, nationalization of other Polish industries advanced much faster than agriculture. At the beginning of the de-stalinization period, the private sector in manufacturing, transportation, and other major industries was legally non-existent. In the early 1950s, those few private productive enterprises still in existence were operated under the handcraft charters. Their share of the industrial output was insignificant. After 1956, the government permitted operation of individually owned businesses, limited both in size and scale. It encouraged expansion of private businesses in those marginal areas where state owned firms encountered difficulties. The service industry, especially non-industrial services, was relatively receptive to small, private firms.

The failure of agricultural collectivization and the new tolerance towards private businesses in other sectors did not, however, reverse the trend towards nationalization.[1] Rather, the policy of accelerated nationalization was replaced by a policy of gradual "socialization." The policy was designed to eliminate private ownership in the long run, or at least to subordinate it to the planned economy. Soon after 1956, as part of a general agriculture policy, the government encouraged private farmers to join cooperatives or various forms of semi-socialized associations. Simultaneously, the government began to discriminate against private farmers in the distribution of materials, equipment, and land. At that time, the government also began to purchase private land. During the 1970s, this policy was intensified by means of a program of farmers' social security which permitted private farmers to exchange their land for retirement pensions.

1. Even now, thirty years after the Stalinist period, the debate over the nationalization of Polish agriculture continues. Cf. Wladzimierz Radlak, Mikolaj Waleszko, "Polemiki, Nasza, Wies, Nasza Specyfika." ("Our Villages, Our Peculiarity"), in *Polityka*, No. 30, 1984.

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Despite these discriminatory policies, the private sector has remained the primary supplier of food and has maintained a relatively higher level of cost efficiency. At the same time, however, the government policy significantly affected capital formation in private agriculture. As in all Eastern European countries, the drainage of agricultural labor during the intensive industrialization of the 1950s and 1960s has resulted in a decline of the labor pool available to agriculture.[2] Under these conditions, low capital investments did not permit Polish farmers to adopt capital intensive technologies and has negatively affected long term agricultural productivity.

This policy of deliberate neglect resulted in chronic shortages of food products for domestic consumption. Towards the end of the 1970s, these shortages, combined with the deteriorating performance of other industries, and aggravated by the effects of the balance of payment crisis, precipitated an economic crisis. By summer 1980, the initial round of local strikes exploded into an avalanche of social frustration and unrest. Under these conditions, the government was forced to recognize the independent trade union movement. Within six months, 60% of the labor force joined Solidarity, which emerged as a countervailing power to the government. But this did not solve the economic problems. Rather, it intensified them. This unprecedented liberalization of political life, however, stimulated an open debate about structural economic reform. As a result, in the Fall of 1981, the government and Solidarity accepted a draft proposal for economic reform and procedures for its implementation.[3]

Both the government and Solidarity recognized that, even if introduced immediately, the reform could not readily solve all of Poland's economic problems. It was hoped, however, that with the direct or indirect support of Solidarity, the momentum of social enthusiasm would stimulate the "grass roots" initiative of managers and workers in state-owned industries and lift the economy out of stagnation. These hopes vanished after the imposition of martial law. Instead, the prosecution of Solidarity resulted in popular distrust of the government.

In early 1982, the military government introduced the first elements of the economic reform. By imposing military order the government intended first to stabilize the economy and then to increase industrial output.[4] Because of political tension and social apathy, however, the impact of the reform was marginal. During 1982, gross economic output declined by 8.49% and even more in the production of consumer products directly related to the standards of living. This, of course, intensified political tension during martial law.

To check the resulting social discontent, the government expanded the rationing of consumer goods and, in Spring 1982, introduced sharp price increases which raised the average cost of living by 56.6%. The drastic rise in the cost of living in turn led to social pressure on the government to raise wages.[5] The government could not resist this pressure, and after six months allowed wage increases which resulted in an inflationary spiral and growing economic instability. The further disequilibrium in the consumer product market itself created a significant incentive for the expansion of

2. Lynn Turgeon, "A Quarter Century of Non-Soviet East European Agriculture," in *The ACES Bulletin*, No. 3, 1983.

3. "Kierunki Reformy Gospodarczej — Propozycja" ("The Course of Economic Reform — the Proposal"), in *Trybuna Ludu* (July 1981).

4. Z. Szeliga, "Przetrwac czy wykrwawic sie," ("Endure or Bleed Out"), in *Polityka*, No. 2, 1982.

5. Z. Mikolajczyk, "Dochody i Place; Dochod Narodowy w 1982," ("Income and Wages; National Income in 1982"), in *Zycie Gospodarcze*, No. 8, 1983.

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private manufacturing and services industries. Thus, from early 1982, the government liberalized administrative, fiscal, and credit policies for privately owned business.

Yet, because of its small share in the total output of the manufacturing industries, and the relatively slow growth of agriculture, the increase in private industries remedied the market disequilibrium only slightly. The most immediate effect of the expansion of the private sector, however, was in the labor market. A sharp decline in the output of the state sector, combined with attempts to reform the economic system, created a real danger of unemployment — a phenomenon previously unknown in post-WWII Eastern Europe. Between 1980 and 1983, in the state-owned sector the number of layoffs exceeded the number of new jobs by 488,000. During the first two years of this period state-owned industries lost, presumably to the private sector, 59,000 employees (14.5%) classified as engineers and technical staff.[6] Since the "technical intelligentsia" was always the most dynamic social stratum, and its special role in the state administration gave it political and bureaucratic experience, these 59,000 engineers and technicians who shifted to the private sector not only enhanced its economic strength but also reinforced it politically.

When the decline of employment in the state sector is added to annual increases of the labor force, the result is an increase in potential unemployment of 1.02 million workers, or a 6% decrease in total employment over four years. To counter the effects of this potential unemployment, the government encouraged early retirement and expanded benefits in maternity programs. Yet, at the same time, in view of the growing cost of living, the government feared that these programs would fail. But, on the other hand, if the programs actually worked, they would reduce the productive capacity of state-owned industries and lead to further consumer goods shortages. Consequently, from this viewpoint, expansion of the private sector helped to moderate the potential crisis in the labor market without decreasing total productivity. As a result of this expansion, the private sector absorbed 35.45% of the surplus labor, or 74.18% of the laid-off workers, so that the share of the private sector in employment increased from 27.98% in 1980 to 31.49% by the end of 1983.

The impact of the expansion of the private sector in the Polish economy was not limited to the labor market, but also led to an increase of their role in capital formation. Thus, the share of the private industries in total investments grew from 9% to 27% in seven years. This shift at least temporarily halted the decapitalization of private agriculture and expanded the capital base of manufacturing and service industries.

From the early 1980s, the most dynamic part of the private industrial sector in Poland were foreign-owned firms. After WWII, investment of foreign capital in a socialist economy was considered unthinkable. During the late 1970s, because of growing foreign currency shortages and intensified domestic inflationary pressures, the Polish government decided to permit some foreign investments in productive operations and allowed the formation of firms with capital brought in by foreigners of Polish descent. Initially, these operations were insignificant. To encourage their expansion, Jaruzelski's government abrogated the limitation of nationality and liberalized laws regarding size and field of operation. This led to a drastic increase in foreign firms which quadrupled in number while their average size doubled. With nearly 30,000 employees, this foreign-owned sector, even if marginal, was far from being invisible so that, not surprisingly, the operation of foreign firms became a subject of intense criticism. The unequal distribution of income, which was a consequence of this sector's extremely dynamic activities, was the real source of hostility and led the govern-

6. *Rocznik Statystyczny 1983*, (*Statistical Year-Book*), GUS, p. 55.

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ment to establish a special commission to evaluate the performance of foreign firms.[7] The findings of this commission rejected the public accusations and the government clearly came out in support of foreign firms. Recently, a low-profile propaganda campaign has begun presenting the management of foreign firms as "a model" for managers of state-owned enterprises. In this campaign, foreign firms are depicted as examples of efficiency, good organization, and flexibility of operation.[8] The objective of this campaign is to increase the role of material incentives to encourage efficiency. Thus, the government is placing more emphasis on economic efficiency than on the equal distribution of income. The growth of this private sector was not merely quantitative. Its growing role as a supplier of goods and services, and as well as an employer, has already affected Polish social and political realities and may trigger substantial and irreversible socio-political changes.

Because of general distrust in the government's ability to solve economic problems and raise the standard of living, there has been a shift towards private enterprise as a more realistic alternative. This has already changed social attitudes and values. It is especially apparent in the growing acceptance of the expansion of all kinds of private economic activities (including semi-legal and illegal operations of the second economy).[9] Recently, a survey of university students has clearly indicated a growing interest in independent professional activity and a declining interest in education for traditional, state sector oriented occupations.[10]

In Eastern Europe a state monopoly of employment is a major source of social control over society. Thus, the creation of alternative employment opportunities undermines this monopoly and has serious political implications. In the past, challenges to the government's monopoly of social control led state authorities to promote nationalization and to discriminate against the private sector. Today, the government's fear remains, as can be seen by the slow implementation of the agreement with the Vatican to establish the "Agriculture Foundation." This Foundation was to provide individual farmers with additional capital resources — mostly in the form of foreign exchange credits and transfers. But this injection of financial resources could build the capital base of this sector beyond the "point of reversibility" and the economic strength of private agriculture would fuel prosperity in other private industries as well.

The post-WWII history of Poland is marked by cyclical political crises conditioned primarily by preceeding declines in economic performance.[11] The present situation resembles such a pre-crisis situation. It is not just the well-organized underground political opposition and preeminent position of the Catholic Church that frightens the government. A sluggish economy, and even a decline of major industries, combined with continued shortages of basic commodities, inflationary pressure, and, above all, stagnation in the standard of living, are anything but comforting to a government that well remembers how such economic factors sparked waves of social protest in the past.

7. Jean Zarzecki, "O Przyszlosci, Nie Tylko, Firm Polonijnych," ("On the Future of Foreign-Owned Firms"), in *Polityka*, No. 39, 1984.

8. Andrzej Mozolowski, "Czy Firma Uspoleczniona Moze Pracowac Jak Polonijna," ("Is the State-Owned Firm Able to Work as Those Which are Foreign-Owned?"), in *Polityka*, No. 48, 1985.

9. Jerzy Kleer, "W Cieniu; Gospodarka Rownolegle," ("In a Shadow: The Parallel Economy"), in *Polityka*, No. 49, 1984.

10. Halina Straczkowska, "Magistrze Radz Sobie Sam," ("Graduate, Take Care of Yourself"), in *Zycie Gospodarcze*, No. 52, 1984.

11. Domenico Mario Nuti, "The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints," in Jan Drewnowski, *Crisis in the East European Economy* (New York, 1982).

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Furthermore, growing disparity in income, social apathy, and distrust of the government contribute to social tension and growing frustration.[12]

It is impossible to predict whether in the near future Poland will follow its historical pattern, resulting in the eruption of yet another political crisis. External geo-political factors such as economic reform in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and other Eastern European countries, as well as changed relations between the Soviet Union and its satellite states under Gorbachev's leadership are crucial. But if a new crisis will erupt, it will differ from previous ones in two fundamental respects: it will be conditioned by 1) the existence of a well-organized and politically experienced opposition movement (Solidarity) having a legitimacy which neither the present government nor the party elite enjoys; and 2) by the interests of an expanded private sector which, because of the seemingly indispensable role in the Polish economy, can be ignored neither by the government nor by the opposition. Independently of, but along with the Catholic Church and the underground labor movement, the private sector will become a significant political actor.

12. Janusz Reykowski, "O Alienacji Politycznej w Polsce," ("On Political Alienation in Poland"), in *Polityka*, No. 14, 1985.

# THE SECRETS OF COLUMBO

## by Agnes Heller

The character-manufacturing industry is constantly busy. New television-series fashion heroes and heroines for every conceivable kind of taste but they rarely hit the mark. The principle of manufacturing is simple enough: a Self can present itself if it is made presentable. How the Self is made presentable is a process described well by the sociologist Erving Goffman. Firstly, one takes a *body*, small or tall, handsome or ugly, highly masculine or oddly unpeculiar. It is then endowed with "signs" which supposedly signalize "the individual personality": mannerisms, speech-patterns, idiosyncratic gestures, judgemental power, toughness, and a degree of intelligence. The next step is to *dress it up*, either with well-tailored suits or with shabby garments, either fashionably or in a conspicuously unfashionable manner. It is then placed into a particular *team*: a law-enforcing agency, "the business world," the "underworld," or located in a specific *environment*, internal or external, similar or hostile to the team. The Self is then turned into a good "role player" or a "discrepant" one, either a "socially well fitting" one or a loner, perhaps even an eccentric. At the end of this process, a character has been "manufactured." All that remains is to invent a story. Once the story is complete the character can act itself out and this it will certainly do. The result is a "make-believe": people watching the show will believe that the character which is portrayed is a "living being." And yet, once they switch off the television, the character traits so carefully constructed down on the finest detail, will fade from the membrane of the viewer's memory. The whole paraphernalia of the manufacturing process, so

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skilfully hung on the empty peg of the body, will not help the image outlive the duration of the show. However sometimes, very rarely, the presentation of the manufactured Self "comes off." It assumes an independent life. It "becomes" a man or a woman in its own right, a veritable prince or princess of modern fairy tales, a symbolic and representative figure. This is precisely what has occurred in the construction of the character of Columbo.

If we were to dissect the "character" of Columbo we would certainly find that it has been manufactured in the usual manner. And yet, we cannot help but notice something different. The presentation of the character of Columbo leaves an indelible and very powerful, mark on our memory. What is the secret?

From the first acquaintance, it is easy to realize that Columbo has not simply been added into certain stories. On the contrary, his character is inseparable from the stories in which he acts. One could not for a moment imagine Columbo in the environment of Chandler's Marlowe or that of Kojak. The situations in which he finds himself are invariably of his own making. Columbo never investigates a murder committed by a poor nobody, nor by someone who is stupid or acting out of blind passion — in his case that would be "out of character." Although the plot of each episode in the series is unique, their *structure* is always identical. And, more importantly, it is *Columbo's regard that defines the narrative structure.* Moreover, it is this regard that defines all other characters. The situation thus created involves more than the viewer's usual self-identification with the protagonist. We view the events through Columbo's regard even *before* he appears on the scene: we wait for him to arrive and we wait for our regard to be verified through his personal appearance in the suspense of the story. All other characters, murderers and victims alike, are but mere objects; they are there simply to be seen and understood. Columbo (and perhaps his dog) is the only subject present; he is the one who sees and understands. All others are parts of the riddle which Columbo will inevitably solve and solve alone. In other words, Columbo's regard *reifies* the environment (including all persons present), reifies it into a riddle, and through him we are drawn into this process of reification, for we only see and perceive through and with Columbo. Columbo is the hero of a reified world in so far as he, and through him we, can remain outside it.

But there is something perplexing about this distribution of roles. On the one hand, we see a reified world, on the other hand, *we are* Columbo, the non-reified subject who enters into a reified world as a *total stranger.* This outlandish figure simply must be "at home" somewhere, he must have an environment of his own. He must have though, apparently, he does not. Columbo makes frequent references to his wife, and yet we never see her; as a matter of fact, we do not even know whether he has a wife or whether he has simply invented her existence. His fellow investigators do not matter at all: they come and go and they are, by definition, incompetent. Indeed, the overwhelming impression one has is that Columbo simply "drops by," as it were, into a reified environment as though he comes from another world. Like Lohengrin, he arrives riding his own peculiar white swan, a wreck of a car. His external appearances hide, rather than reveal his inner world. In the most profound meaning of the word, he lives, like Lohengrin, *Incognito.*

We see the world with Columbo's eyes and it appears as an ensemble of reified objects, a marionette theatre, in which all the puppets are pulled by a few, and very conspicuous strings. By means of this identification with Columbo's gaze, we place ourselves *outside* the pre-arranged stage; we are not party to the story, but we are party to the process of *exposure.*

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Collingwood once made the interesting remark that representative detectives succeed in capturing the spirit of dominant theories of history. Needless to say, the author-creator of a master detective need not be aware of this deeper implication, and yet, the more the spirit of a dominant theory of history is captured, the stronger the appeal of the protagonist of the story. Sherlock Holmes was the representative detective of the age of *positivism.* He solved the riddles of each and every crime by proceeding from fact to fact. Hercule Poirot, as well as Miss Marple, introduced the reader into the age of *interpretation* ranging from "understanding sociology" to hermeneutics. Instead of concentrating on uncovering traces, they set about their work by attempting to grasp how the famous "grey cells" were working. In entering into endless and seemingly purposeless, *conversations* with all the characters concerned, Poirot and Miss Marple patiently waited until someone gave them a lead. They then enthusiastically seized upon such a lead, interpreted it, and went on with further conversations while narrowing the circle of suspects, until the final solution to the riddle would suddenly dawn upon them.

Columbo applies both methods. He looks for traces of evidence and he enters into seemingly purposeless conversations. Yet whatever he does, the basic framework in which he acts is completely different. Agatha Christie presents us with a world of subjects. Neither Poirot, nor Miss Marple, nor for that matter, we as readers, are placed outside the story. Investigators and readers are parts of the world in which the story takes place: *we share the same history.* This history has the usual three temporal dimensions: past, present and future. Something occurred in the past (a crime was committed), sometimes it is happening in the present: we are engaged in "understanding" history. The present is being continuously transformed into the past: in the process of understanding history, new crimes are committed. In uncovering the murderer, the future opens up for the people we identify with, people we come to like: we come to be involved in their future. But if we turn to Columbo, we notice immediately that his stories are ahistorical. Put differently, history, in his stories, has no temporal dimensions. The viewer is placed into the situation of a *voyeur.* We witness the crime, we know who the criminal is at the very beginning. There is no past in these stories, for the past is present, *it is presented.* The fact that we are strangers to the story is but a stage-managed ploy. In addition, it is not only we who know the murderer, so too does Columbo. At the very moment he enters the stage, he already knows the answers to all the questions he puts. The story which unfolds in the present does not lead to any future (which, as the future, should always be unknown). The future itself is present — it is presented, or at least clearly indicated in advance. The tension of the story is essentially ahistorical in nature. Moreover, it is *anti-historical.* We confront a *mental duel.* Columbo investigates the traces of the act committed and enters into endless and seemingly purposeless conversations, *not in order to find the solution to the riddle* (which he knows anyhow), but in order to *lay traps.* The murderer is not uncovered, he or she is entrapped. Columbo's goal is thus not to uncover but to expose. And who performs the exposure? The marionettes cannot actively contribute to this operation, for they themselves are objects, mere things. They simply function as means for the Great Exposer, they are used as props for the setting of the trap. It is only the Subject, the only one who does not belong to the world he enters, who has the capacity to expose. It is precisely this quality that ensures Columbo's triumph over all the "thinking-machines" — however intelligent and learned they may be.

In the Columbo series, the main, almost the exclusive, motive for murder is greed. As familiar a motive as greed may be, it appears here with certain peculiar con-

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notations to which I shall return shortly. What strikes us at first glance however, is the *method* applied by the murderers. Murders here are not only premeditated, but also highly sophisticated. Moreover, the murderers make use of a wide range of the latest gadgets and devices, *they murder with technology.* To make the point more conspicuous, there is a battling contrast between the technological skill of the murderers and the overemphasized unskillfullness of Columbo, and it is this contrast which underscores the fundamental distribution of roles in the story. The reified object is a thinking machine who mobilizes technology to best achieve its aims. Clearly, technology is to be understood here as a *metaphor* for "contemporaneity." Our present age is the technological age, the murderer of the present age is the thinking machine. The Subject who exposes the murderer is unskillful, he is not part of the technological age. He not only enters the scene from an outside world, but he also carries with him a kind of time which is "out of time." In turn, we too are lured into the same peculiar time dimension.

I cannot decide whether the creators of the *Columbo* series would be astonished to hear that their master detective, and the stories in the context of which he moves, are but popular variations of very complex contemporary philosophical themes. It is not overly difficult to glean from the character of Columbo simplified summaries of Heidegger's thought, of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and *Anti-Oedipus* by Deleuze and Guattari. None of these is, of course, explicitly articulated in the Columbo stories, but the *spirit* of all of them is palpably present. Contrasting the "authentic person" with the inauthenticity of Being-in-the-World of "*das Man*" with his or her technology "at hand," identifying the modern age with the age of technology and of "instrumental reason" (make note of the obviously high IQ of all murderers in the series), associating knowledge with a will-to-power, deconstructing history — does all this not strike a familiar chord amongst those who have read these theories? In this seemingly modest television series, Adorno's philosophical handstand of presenting everyone's, but the philosopher's own mind and regard, as hopelessly fetishized, is smoothly translated into the language of a modern fairy-tale, the only difference being that the simplicity of the presentation tends to make us forget one undeniable reality: the celluloid of the television film, that is, the very medium of the story itself, is also the product of the same technology which allegedly fetishizes the minds and regards of us all. Indeed, Columbo has become a representative, even a mythological figure precisely because he and his stories have caught the spirit of our times. But there is much more to it.

I mentioned the Lohengrin-like features of the simple police lieutenant from Los Angeles. The hero enters the stage from *outside*, from an unidentified place; he is timeless. He is "the angel of justice." He must have a divine intuition for he *knows* the truth before exploring the circumstances, he never errs, he does not even make detours or mistakes, or if he does, it is only seemingly so. We, humans, err quite often, we make serious mistakes; even supermen like James Bond commit errors. James Bond is indeed a superman for he invariably succeeds in correcting his mistakes against overwhelming odds, and while he is often trapped, he always escapes even from a hopeless position to win and eliminate his enemies. For his part, Columbo is not a superman, *he is superhuman.* We see the world with Columbo's eyes, we are subjects like him. Yet, were we to share his superhuman quality, we would surely miss the pleasure of being voyeurs. Indeed, it is precisely the brilliant and shrewd device of situating the viewer as a voyeur in the crime that marks the success of the series. We are present when the crime is committed, the crime is, therefore, presented to us: thus we need not have any divine intuition. We are identical, though at the same time not identical, with

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Columbo. We are the audience as subjects, he is the Exposer as the Subject. We are not exposers because, from the start, nothing remains unexposed to us. The principle of identity and non-identity is applied to us by the producers of the series.

Let me now return to the starting point: how are characters manufactured? Terms like "character manufacturing," "presentation of self," "group performance," "stage setting," "discrepant roles" have been borrowed from Erving Goffman, in particular from his book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* As is well known, Goffman's message, although not his vocabulary, is closely related to extreme behaviourism, nihilism and deconstructionism. Thus when I use Goffman's language in elucidating Columbo's position, I am not departing markedly from explaining the story in terms of certain contemporary theories of history.

The world into which Columbo enters from the outside, and which we enter together with Columbo, is marked by "props" and "signs" which can easily be read: they are the signs of *wealth.* The camera guides our eyes in such a way that we do not miss a single item of the exhibition: houses of immense proportion, heated swimming pools, luxurious furniture (generally of questionable taste), the gymnasium inside the mansion, the endless parks, the paintings on the wall, ballroom-sized bathrooms, security devices and so on. Occasionally there might be other, more personal items as well: elegant clothing, mysterious gadgets pointing to the expertise and status of a prominent intellectual or to the holder of a power position. The viewer thus sees the perpetration of the crime and the signs of wealth together. The camera *imposes* certain associations upon us: wealth is a crime, the wealthy are criminals, wealth generates crime and the like. Sometimes another association is imposed upon us as well: people in highly intellectual professions are wealthy and they, and their profession, are inevitably linked to crime; a high IQ level has an affinity with murder. All such associations create an *emotional atmosphere* which is constituted by the following elements: amazement ("How wealthy certain people are!"), appeal ("How good it is to be wealthy and clever!"), resentment ("How well these bastards do!"), revengefullness ("they have to be taught a lesson, they are so unashamedly rich"), and, above all, *envy.* The very association imposed upon the viewer right at the beginning (murder equals wealth) offers as outlet for the frustrated viewers to act out their envy with a claim to justice, at least in an imaginary form. Moreover, it is precisely Columbo, the Great Exposer, the angel of justice who spells out the very association so strongly imposed on us by props and signs.

He bolsters the envy of the viewer by his remarks on the symbols of wealth, by comparing his salary to the luxury surrounding the suspect, as well as comparing what *he* can afford and "they" can afford. One need not be well-versed in Aristotle or Rousseau to know that comparison is both the source and the expression of envy.

Columbo's "presentation" is perfectly designed for the role he is supposed to perform. This is a discrepant role, discrepant in two different senses. Firstly, Columbo himself embodies the living contrast to the reified world. He is an alien: here, the ethnic, Italian background is not a *couleur locale* as in so many television plays; it is, in fact, an essential element in the construction of the character. The connotation of his name (dove) underscores the transcendent association: the dove (of God) enters the nest of hawks (the devil). Columbo is ugly, clumsy, poor, badly dressed, whereas the "others" are slim, elegant, sporting, handsome, well-bred and well-behaved. His worn, shabby trenchcoat assumes a symbolic dimension as one of Columbo's major props. Yet, Columbo is not only contrasted to the world he enters, he is also discrepant in his role as a police officer. His appearance would seem to belie his role as an officer

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of the law. In other words, the props and the insignia signify Columbo, they tell us something about him but, at the same time, they hide Columbo, they conceal his real Self. The Great Exposer himself is concealed, albeit not before us (we know him too well), but before the other characters. The "signs" of Columbo reveal some parts of the truth (he is poor, he is ugly) in order to conceal the essential truth: he looks clumsy but he is not, he looks naive but he is sophisticated, he looks dull and blunt-witted but he outsmarts everyone. The discrepancy between outward appearance and inner substance is not only presented as a *fact about* Columbo, but also functions as an instrument *for* Columbo, and he utilizes this instrument with consumate skill, ease and inner satisfaction.

Put simply, Columbo approaches the world of the "others" with *irony*. Whenever he leaves and returns to ask yet another question and when he *pretends* that the question has just "occurred to him" and when he also *pretends* to accept the answer as wholly satisfactory, he pursues an irony of the most subtle order. Columbo's ironical lines of inquiry are similar to those of Socrates who was also ugly, odd, un-aristocratic and even vulgar. It was precisely Socrates who always asked "yet another" question which "had just occurred to him" and who pretended to be wholly satisfied with the answer, who make his interlocutors uneasy and who confused them, and who made their lines of defence ultimately crumble. Columbo also practices *self-irony*, yet his irony is never really aimed at himself, rather at the contrast between himself, the environment and the role he performs in it. In this respect too he resembles Socrates. And, to push the analogy even further, Columbo wins by virtue of his supreme *wisdom*. The duel between the murderer and Columbo is conducted on an *intellectual plane*. The knowledge of the "technological age" is high and mighty, but it is computerized and mechanic. If challenged by subjective wisdom, it will inevitably be on the losing side.

And yet, this is not the whole story. Although Columbo wins the day with his wisdom, his power does not reside in wisdom. He is not a private detective, he is a cop. In the last instance, his power is that of the Law, that of the State. He is the Law, he is the State, he is, therefore, a symbol of Power. The Power of Wealth is challenged here by the Power of the State and the Law, and it is the latter which will turn out to be victorious.

Let me now return to the problem of the identity and non-identity of Columbo and his audience. As pointed out, we, the viewers of the show, see the world with Columbo's eyes, but whereas we witness the crime, he is the one who exposes it. Thus the viewer and Columbo start in a non-identical position. But there is more to it. Since the role played by Columbo is discrepant in a dual sense, *there is the possibility of a discrepancy in the act of identification.* Which Columbo is the one we identify ourselves with? Which aspect of his self will guide our regard? Which aspect will be dominant in guiding our regard? There are many options here and many possibilities. Let me enumerate a few of them. One can identify mainly with the props and signs of Columbo, especially with his shabby raincoat, his clumsiness and ugliness, his wreck of a car and the like — in other words, with the "little man" who sets the trap for the powerful and immoral rich. One can be a David with him. One can distrust Goliath with him and, finally, one can defeat Goliath with him. If, in addition, one is attracted by the emotional atmosphere of envy, the "lessons" can be appropriated in a mildly Fascist colouring ("If I cannot have as much as they have, they should rot in prison"). One can also identify with the "inner substance" of Columbo which is concealed by the props and signs which surround him: his irony, wisdom and self-irony which will be victorious over computerized reason. One can also identify with the outlandish charm of his character,

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with this 'emissary of God' of a modern fairy tale who enters a spoilt world to crush its inherent evil. One can also identify with the officer of law who carries the promise of a democratic justice in a capitalist world ("we, little men, *are* democracy"). Yet, irrespective of whichever character trait we identify with, whichever we reject or disregard, we all love Columbo and wish him well. To speak in a very subjective manner: I am quite ill at ease when Columbo plays on envy by comparing his salary to the wealth of others (for I do not believe that envy carries the promise of a better world), but I love his irony, his incognito, his intuitive knowledge of human character. In a word, I am on his side and wish him well.

What are, then, the secrets of Columbo? There are several invisible secrets which reveal themselves only to a theoretical scrutiny. Perhaps the most crucial of them is that the series captures the spirit of our contemporary historical consciousness and imaginary. The second secret is that the televison play manages to evoke so many mythical, even transcendent, connotations (David against Goliath, Lohengrin, the "angel of justice," "God's emissary," the dove) without ever departing from a naturalistic-realistic setting of the stage, and without relying on the occurrences of miracular events. The third secret is the skillful combination of a one-dimensional representation, that of a reified world, with a multi-dimensional presentation, that of Columbo.

Yet there are certain secrets which are not hidden, therefore they cannot legitimately be called secrets proper. Columbo is a one-man show. If you like the hero, you accept the show, even the most simplistic and unlikely story. You do not even care if all other persons are conspicuously synthetic and fabricated. Columbo is the person who sets the trap. You watch a cat-and-mouse play. You know in advance that the "others" will be trapped. You are pleased that those others are going to be trapped for you like the cat. You like the cat, because you are the cat yourself. The authors of Columbo manufactured a character everyone can identify with. This is Columbo's major secret.

## THE SECRETS OF HELLER

### by Moishe Gonzales

According to Heller, the three main secrets of Columbo, aside from the astonishing fact that everyone can identify with him, are that 1) he captures the spirit of the time; 2) he successfully recycles mythical imagery; and 3) he skillfully contraposes one-dimensional representation to a multi-dimensional presentation. These, however, can also be seen as Heller's secrets: the secrets of what has been mislabelled as a "New Class" outlook in reference to a Left intellectualistic *Weltanschauung* which, given its ideological location, systematically misreads reality to best fit a group's dreams and aspirations. In this sense, Heller also captures the spirit of the times in prototypically exemplifying this ideology by operating within a mythical modernist imagery which seeks to market a multi-dimensional reality long since homogenized out of existence.

Consider the introduction of Goffman to explain the "presentation of the self" or

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how Columbo is constructed. Clearly, the much simpler commonsensical intuition that a TV character is artificially and mechanically put together to appeal to a broad variety of tastes and thus capture a sizable chunk of the TV viewing public, is not sufficiently sophisticated. One needs to throw in "signs," "discrepant roles" and such-like sociological witchcraft which says nothing substantially new but successfully legitimates the sociologist as the expert who alone can decipher the various hidden meanings in the jargon. This mystified common sense betrays the intellectualist bias. TV characters are always manufactured in this *bricolage* fashion other than occasionally reconstituting real historical entities. Yet, in spite of this slip in irrelevant sociologese, Heller is perceptive enough in pointing out that since not all TV personalities so constituted are automatically successful, Columbo's success is due to his capturing of the spirit of the time. Here Heller brilliantly unpacks the combination of populism and State power in the personality of Columbo pitted against Wealth which, peculiarly enough, always loses at the end.

But she fails to develop this insight and drops it in favor of a fluffy philosophical discussion about identity and non-identity which goes nowhere — again, intellectualistic filler of no explanatory value. What she should have done is to identify Columbo as the embodyment of the New Deal ideology whereby "the people" and the State join forces to checkmate "criminal" Wealth which, left unregulated and on its own, not only leads to depressions but also becomes corrupt and immoral. Now, this is *real* fiction. In actual life, of course, Wealth reigns supreme, while the State manipulates people into passive consumers and disciplined producers smoothly feeding into the logic of rationalized and state-regulated corporate capitalism. In this context, Columbo ultimately reasserts the values of "freedom, justice and the American way." In his capacity as State power, he eventually triumphs over Wealth which, no longer tied to the work ethic, has deteriorated to criminality. Unlike earlier super-heroes such as Superman, and the Lone Ranger who were individualistic outsiders imposing justice in the face of an impotent and inefficient State unable to do the job because of its hidden ties to Wealth and bureaucracy, Columbo is the arm of the State still bogged down with bureaucratic inefficiency but now successfully bypassed by populist cleaverness. Clearly, this New Deal ideology has readily displaced the rugged inner-directed individualist of pre-1929 lassez-faire capitalism.

Heller implicitly endorses this New Deal mythology and celebrates its ideological depiction of democracy, justice and morality. But these values are formal social values of that mythical civil society where intellectuals thrive as its agents and spokesmen in the State in their unsuccessful bid for power and privilege in a public sphere where rhetoric rather than big bucks are the main currency. It is ideological to the utmost in that it assumes that Wealth had ever relinquished power and submitted to an autonomous and just Law where the common man is equal to the "rich and famous." In this Heller successfully exemplifies the spirit of the times by articulating the ideology of experts, intellectuals, specialists and bureaucrats legitimating their privileged social role by selling democracy, justice and efficiency to a populace that has long since been cretinized into passivity.

In demystifying and re-mystifying the secrets of Columbo, however, Heller forgets the obvious. Columbo is off prime time and has been off for quite some time. In his place we find the likes of J.R. squandering Wealth and Power in "Dallas," "Dynasty" and all the other clones. The new confrontation is no longer between Superman as the apologist for laissez-faire capitalism against corruption and immorality, nor between Columbo as the New Deal apologist against criminal Wealth, but "good" Wealth

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against "bad" Wealth. To no one's surprise, this is the age of Reagan. Both laissez-faire capitalism and the New Deal are closed historical stages. So is Columbo, who has long since been banished to late night re-runs in the U.S. or still hangs on prime time in the cultural provinces of Australia, South Africa and the Philippines where the new socio-cultural waves from the metropolis usually take a few decades to arrive.

In the age of Reagan, Columbo is demoted to dishing out parking tickets while Wealth and Power reign supreme. It is no longer the State in alliance with the people that catch "bad" criminal Wealth nowadays, but, in the slick depictions of the culture industry, good Wealth or market forces. Columbo and the State have clearly been marginalized. And so have intellectuals — especially left intellectuals whose fate is inextricably connected with the fortunes of the State. At a time when to be called a bureaucrat is an insult, and experts are increasingly viewed with deep suspicion, intellectuals have nowhere to go but to collect dust in increasingly irrelevant academies where their only protection is the inaccessibility of their professional jargon clouding a self-referential discourse of no social import.

The real secret of Columbo is that, in the 1980's, he has been banished to the Traffic Division. In the new imagery, now successfully marketed by the culture industry, the confrontation is between Wealth and "the people" against the State. The reconstituted myth of social mobility welds the alliance and challenges the parasitic State and its dependent intellectuals. And what is worst of all, today the intellectuals, the bureaucrats and the experts are increasingly becoming the targets of Columbo's new wrath. In the future, social parking for intellectuals is likely to become an incrasingly problematic proposition.

## EAST EUROPEAN REPORTER

### by Dick Howard

Finally those of us for whom developments in Eastern — or Central! — Europe are at least one of the keys to unlocking the question of a radical democratic, post-Marxist politics can now get between the same covers news from the three countries which — at however uneven a pace — are developing or (in Czechoslovakia especially) trying to preserve an autonomous civil society. What is more, the "news" is not just information and reprints of outrages or too lonesome struggles; the news comes also an analyses, sometimes as documents from within (Janos Kis on Yalta, Adam Michnik on the Polish elections, Vaclav Havel on the Peace Movement); and it comes too from without, by the editors of the *East European Reporter* and their collaborators.

The *East European Reporter* is published in London, by an editorial board composed of Czech, Polish and Hungarians who discovered the practical virtue of mutual aid under the umbrella of a not-for-profit East European Cultural Foundation (of which a branch is being established in the U.S.). The journal is attuned to the day-to-day developments through which political consciousness is created. This positive slant

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means that the forms of repression encountered are analyzed, not decried. The downside of this orientation, thus far, is that the three editorial groups have not succeeded (in their first 3 issues at least) in bringing together the developments under a common orientation. This, of course, is not necessarily their fault; East — Central! — Europe has not been melded into a seamless whole just because of its dependence on Russian force and Leninist internal politics.

The lack of unity among the politics presented in the *East European Reporter* may be remedied by some of the actions proposed by its sponsor, the East European Cultural Foundation . . . if monies are available. Since "oppositional" figures often find themselves jobless, and since funds cannot be sent directly, one means of material aid is the commissioning of research articles; another is the payment for translations. One article has already been produced (on "Judicial Repression in Czechoslovakia") by the pseudonymous Tomas Aurednik, a Charter 77 signatory active with VONS. Others can be expected.

The range of issues covered by the *East European Reporter* is wide, and important. It ranges from the short story to the pamphlet or open letter across the historical reinterpretation (Yalta, Jews in Hungary) to the positions debated on actual political questions outside as well as inside the country (Peace Movement, ecology, the church's role in popular culture). Each issue contains also brief mentions of new books and a final "Stop Press" page including short recent messages from within the countries, or mention of fast-breaking stories that will be covered later. These latter contributions make a final point worth stressing: the editors do make use of official sources, but most of their materials come from unofficial friends, with whom their contacts, clearly, are close. This information — which they offer to journalists seeking to keep up to date with these difficult-to-enter societies — intrigues the lay reader as well.

The *East European Reporter* is a useful addition. Its positive orientation forces us, in the West, to think positively about the nature and possibilities offered by our own democratic forms at the same time that we recognize that democracy is also a movement from within society.

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# Reviews:

## Hans Joas, *G.H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of his Thought*. Translated from the German by Raymond Meyer. (Cambridge, England: Polity Press/Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985). 226 pp., $27.50, cloth.

Mead is the Atlantis of modern social thought. He lies buried in the deep between Europe and the U.S., a substantial mass of learning and theoretical play, familiar only to those few divers with enough equipment and time to clear off tons of detritus and map the strange terrain. Until his recent death at 83, the divers were led by David L. Miller, one of Mead's last students before his own death in 1931. His *George Herbert Mead* (Texas, 1973) has become the favored primer in a small field that includes earlier works by Natanson (1956) and Pfuetze (1961). An accomplished philosopher, student in seven of Mead's courses at Chicago, and insistently lucid writer, Miller was able to domesticate Mead, to bring into friendly prose that improbable style of discourse that seemed to mix Romantic poetry, Fichte, Darwinism, *Lebensphilosophie*, Whitehead, and relativity theory, plus lifelong interchange with Dewey, Tufts, and natural scientists in Hyde Park. Perhaps alone, Miller claims that Mead's work is not difficult to read, but he could hardly be expected to know since he listened to the man speak for hundreds of hours and found the rhythm of sense that is not reproduced often enough in the posthumous volumes. Though a number of unpublished dissertations have considered one or another aspect of Mead's ideas, just recently new books have begun to reawaken passionate interest in Mead. Lewis and Smith's *American Sociology and Pragmatism* (1980), Goff's *Marx and Mead* (1980), Habermas' long chapter in volume two of *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, and now Joas' dense, revisionist re-analysis, first published in 1980, all signal the revival of Meadianism. With Joas' book, Mead study enters a new period of intensity. He wrote this book in his 20s, in the "intimidating and oppressive" shadow of the last Frankfurter (p. 2), in hopes of proving that Mead was "the most important theorist of intersubjectivity between Feuerbach and Habermas."

Joas begins by defending his "naivety," his anachronistic wish to study biographically and with "comprehensive philological" technique the lifework of a thinker whose place in the history of social thought has not been secured to date (pp. 3ff). But he shrewdly reminds us that Dilthey, Mead's intended dissertation director,[1] thoroughly documented the need for biographical dissections if one's goal is an "autodidactic . . . freely chosen obligation" to *Verstehen*. Joas' effort to comprehend Mead's every word reminds one of Weber's in "Science as a Vocation," that combination of austere rigor and passionate, almost unruly persistence in tracking down the last scrap of text and bringing the entire *Lebenswerk* into the clear light of organized reason. Given Mead's love of things German — his best chapter in *Movements of Thought* is on Fichte; he married in Berlin; he studied with Dilthey, Ebbinghaus, Zeller, Schmoller, Paulsen,

1. Harold Orbach, the foremost American expert on Mead, claims that the work of Paulsen, then associate professor, must have interested Mead much more than did Dilthey's since Mead took six courses from the former and only two from the latter. The reason why Dilthey was brought in at all was simply because only full professors could sit on oral exams which Mead had to pass to graduate. In a letter to me, Orbach explains that Joas used a letter of Mead which he not only misreads (and does not quote directly) but also misdates (1891 rather than 1890 as in the original) to give the false impression of a strong relation with Dilthey.



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and Wundt — it is appropriate that his recasting of Mead should be produced by a German. One of Joas' primary departures was to sever the identification between symbolic interactionism and the "fragmentary appropriation of Mead's work" (p. 7) carried out by Blumer and others. Joas begins by clearing the decks of *all* prior interpretations, which he groups into six types. First and certainly the hardest to swallow for those initially acquainted with Mead through Charles Morris' introductions to *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934) and *The Philosophy of the Act* (1938) is Joas' repudiation of the term "social behaviorism" — especially as it was later used by Israel Scheffler and the Iowa School of social psychology. Any connecting of Watson's behaviorism and Mead's does serious injury to the latter's "metatheoretical claims," and is only partly due to Mead's own use of the term, since he tried to distance himself from Watson but refused to relinquish the word to him.[2]

Blumer's Meadianism, inaugurated with an essay in 1938, does carry forward a tradition "in the spirit of Mead" (p. 6), but is fragmentary and too subjectivist to suit Joas, who sees in the forgotten portions of Mead's work a corrective to this tendency toward solipsism. A third stream lies within phenomenology, beginning with Schutz's references to Mead (e.g., "On Multiple Realities"), and Maurice Natanson's *The Social Dynamics of G.H. Mead*. Joas sees in it "two critical weaknesses," first its philological errors in dating Mead's work, and second the misconstrual of Mead *vis a vis* Husserl's orthodox phenomenology, which, taken together, make the book "unreliable and unusable." A fourth direction of Mead-work leads into theology, that of Paul Pfuetze, Charles Gillin, and Konrad Raiser, which "undoes Mead's intellectual evolution," since he was trying to escape Christianized ethics, not elaborate them. Metaphysics has also been called upon in evaluating Mead, especially by Andrew Reck, Harold Lee, and David Miller. Though Joas shows unusual respect for the latter's book, it "can by no means be considered a definitive monograph on that thinker" (p. 9).

The sixth and final set of interpretations Joas calls "the *new understanding*" by younger scholars — Gary Allan Cook's dissertation (Yale, 1966) and his articles on Mead's ethics that followed are the best — and located Mead within the renaissance of pragmatism, typified by Apel abroad and Bernstein and Rorty in this country. Joas joins this new group, but ups the ante by having studied "the entire corpus of Mead's work, including his literary writings, the available correspondence, and writings that I found myself and that are interpreted here for the first time" (p. 10). He has tried to "proceed genetically," to comprehend Mead's development, but only until 1912 when the concept of symbolic interaction was developed (though not so named). After that the study becomes thematic. Joas' approach is clearly a child of Schleiermacher (whom Mead esteemed and briefly wrote about early in his career [p. 56]) and Dilthey: the view of expository scholarship that calls for study of entire lifeworks as the intellec-

2. Again, Orbach: "Watson coined 'behaviorism' while he was at Johns Hopkins, not Chicago. His later praise for Mead was not forced. I have evidence he and Mead were planning a large animal research facility at Chicago. Angell's rejection of this was one reason Watson left Chicago. Mead was one of the few psychologists who adopted the term behaviorism early on . . . So it was never a question of Mead's not wanting to relinquish the term to Watson — he took it from him and developed it, critically, much as he did with 'gesture' from Wundt, 'pragmatism' from James, etc. Mead welcomed Watson's coinage and his innovation and expanded it . . . the main sources of Mead's social psychology are totally antithetical to the Dilthey tradition. I say this, having read what Mead read and having traced the origin of many of his terms to their source"; letter to me dated March 8, 1986. The distance between this Mead and Joas' is pronounced, and will probably increase when Orbach will eventually present his counter-evidence. Joas tries to make Mead more interesting today, but only by extensively twisting the historical record.

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tual *and* ethical ticket of admission into the drama of the writer's achievement. Along with very few others, Joas has read practically everything Mead wrote, indicated by his unmatched bioliography of his work — 102 items — and his thoroughgoing use of it. There may be others who know more about Mead's life, but not about the "genetic" self-construction of his own "mind."

Today there are many Meads: the behaviorist, hard or soft, as the case may be; the legendary political reformer and kindly teacher in Hyde Park; the historian of philosophy; the pragmatist, and so on. Miller's Mead, according to Joas, is defective because of its static and de-Europeanized character. Now we meet Joas' New Mead, working simultaneously against predominant American and European versions of interactionism. The Mead-totem carried by symbolic interactionists, many of whom seem scarcely to have read *Mind, Self, and Society*, and know nothing of his more important compilations, bears as little resemblance to the New (total) Mead as the 50s studies of status inconsistency have to the Absolute Weber. But several dozen monographs on Weber have appeared in the last ten years, many de-sanitizing his work along various axes, while no such outpouring has benefited Mead. So in one leap, Joas overcomes orthodox readings and superimposes his own: a politicized Mead whose hopes for democratically constructed ethics dovetail handily with current work by European theorists. This does not necessarily mean that Anselm Strauss' Mead of the early 60s, nor Miller's of the 70s, are cut adrift in the way Parsons' Weber and Durkheim have been. It is more a question of how far one is willing to follow Joas in his redefinition of Mead, away from mechanistic, Darwinian behaviorism — which has suited various positivist camps — and into a dialogical, hermeneutic, and emancipatory theorizing of the kind Wellmer, Offe, Habermas, Heller, Dallmayr, and others have made commonplace since the early 70s, when Joas was a student. There may be little more ultimate truth to Joas' version than there is to Morris' reflex behaviorism of the 30s, if one takes "ultimate" as relating somehow to Mead's self-image were he to express it. But if Mead's ideas are to continue influencing social thought, Joas had better be right. His Mead-for-the-80s is surely more attractive and comprehensive than the apolitical social-psychologist of some years ago. The principal question revolves around the accuracy of Joas' interpretation, if an "historicist" philosophy of method is followed, *or* to what extent Joas' Mead serves contemporary theory and the political temper allied with it better than earlier Meads — the so-called "presentist" argument within historiography. This rats' nest of trouble would not have clogged up our vision had Mead written his own books with his own prefaces. But since all but two were assembled from stenographers' tablets and supplemented with students' lecture notes, they have provoked a hermeneutic miasma that would have checked the forward progress of any interpreter less zealous to establish an Ur-Mead than was Joas.

Joas begins by commenting in detail on an aspect of Mead's life and praxis that has interested no-one else, his position on WWI. In his unswerving support for Wilson's entrance into war, Mead — "this radically democratic intellectual" (p. 10) — succumbed to the same shortsightedness that one of Dewey's star pupils, Randolph Bourne, attacked in his "Twilight of Idols" (1917) regarding the limits of reformist intellectualism. Bourne understood, as his teacher did not, the political-economic dimension of the war, the requirements of First World imperialism. Neither Mead nor any of his pragmatist colleagues saw through the rhetoric of American "heroism." For Joas, Mead's attitude toward the Great War serves, as it does for the entire generation, including Weber, as the litmus test of his emancipatory convictions. In the same way that Seymour Martin Lipset and many others will be queried thirty years hence *vis à vis*

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Vietnam, Joas has seriously examined the role that Mead's writings on the war (mostly *Chicago Herald* editorials in 1917) played in his intellectual development. If he seems overly concerned with the import of these items (68 through 71) in Mead's bibliography, this is only due to the complete unconcern of everyone else. (It is analogous to Joas' polite omission of crucial facts that Miller sums up in one terse line: ". . . since the Castle family [Mead's wife] was well off financially, he had no money problems after 1891 [his marriage] . . ." [Miller, 1973, p. xxxi].[3]) To this extent Mannheim's perspectival knowledge is right: without Joas' own background in mind, it is hard to imagine how Mead's jingoism, mild as it was relative to others,' could figure importantly in his intellectual biography.

From this surprising beginning, Joas settles down into more conventional analyses, explicating Mead's relation to his German instructors in Leipzig and Berlin — a result of his earlier study with Royce at Harvard, and the fruitful friendships with Dewey and Alfred Lloyd at Ann Arbor. Joas' knowledge of and access to German "data" allows him to explain "the differences between pragmatism and irrationalist European '*Lebensphilosophie*' . . ." (p. 10), and to demonstrate that "Mead's approach to a theory of intersubjectivity is incomprehensible without an understanding of his relationship to German idealism, and that on the other hand some problems of the German philosophical tradition can be solved precisely with the help of Mead's approach" (p. 11).

Both Mead and Joas accept the partial validity of Dilthey's methodological nostrums for the human sciences. Yet they cannot very well follow him into Husserl and then Bergson, mainly because of the political consequences. For reasons that no-one has made clear, a putative connection has grown up between the *lebensphilosophische* tradition and right-wing oppression, or, more precisely, between writers who concentrated on *das Irrationalitätsproblem* (Nietzsche, Dilthey, Heidegger, Scheler, Bergson, even Stefan George) and authoritarianism of Catholic, fascist, or monarchical types. Lukács' *The Destruction of Reason* is the bellwether of this trend, but the politically repugnant sensation that arose from works that stress a nonpositivist, unpredictable, subterranean influence in human action goes back at least to Weber's essay on Knies (1906). So Joas accepts the depth and "richness" of *Lebensphilosophie*, but casts out its collective consequences in favor of clear-eyed American pragmatism, not so readily tied to repressive politics. The fabled *Spannung* of German intellection since Schopenhauer, the antinomic tension that produces both its liveliness and self-destructiveness, stems precisely from this inability to reconcile individual complexity and contradiction with the orderly requirements of public sociation. In flailing against the "irrationalist" tendencies of thinkers whom Mead esteemed, but also feared, Joas reproduces the same anxiety that worried Weber during the *fin de siècle*, and later displeased Mead during the late twenties — "the fat, intolerant years," as Holmes called them (Joas, pp. 27, 220).

Except for the rhetorical lapse of 1917, Mead knew that "personality and social structure" do not often glide into each other so easily as the cliché suggests. In labelling the pivotal article "The Social Self" (1913) as his own "Phenomenology of Mind," he explained, ". . . I take the function of philosophy to be the *attempted harmonizing* of this

3. Orbach questions Miller's belief that Mead's wife's family riches protected him from having to worry about money: "Mead did have financial problems after 1891 even though his wife was *theoretically* well-off. I don't think Mead's financial situation, then or later, has any real bearing on the style or substance of his productivity; there are other more clear and directly relevant factors." *Ibid.*

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larger self and its implied larger community, with the immediate community in which the individuals find themselves members" (Joas, pp. 232, no. 33; emphasis added).[4] Mead knew well enough the practical and theoretical gap between selves, wayward and cooperative by turns, and communal achievements, and perhaps for this reason was less inclined to jettison the lessons of Dilthey's generation than intellectuals in the post-fascist era. This range of difficulties can only be mentioned here, but it must since it infects Joas' presentation of Mead as much as Habermas' prescriptions for a re-legitimated public life — and for similar reasons.

The *piéce de résistance* comes in a chapter devoted to "The Definition of the Psychical," "never before interpreted" (p. 11), in which "Mead was striving to introduce . . . a fully developed concept of subjectivity into psychology." Aficionados may be surprised to learn that Reck's excerpt is only about 60% of the 1903 original. Among the many items of Meadiana that Joas unearthed, this is the one he lavishes most energy on, convinced that " 'The Definition of the Psychical' is not merely the intra-psychological preparation of Mead's social-psychological approach, but also offers, in rudimentary form, an understanding of psychology from the standpoint of a theory of communicative action that to the present day has not been entirely equalled anywhere, nor been fully developed" (p. 89). Uncharacteristically Joas exploits italics twice in the chapter. First, he maintains that the article "can be described as *an attempt to introduce into the consitution of scientific psychology an unabridged notion of subjectivity*" (p. 69). "Unabridged" is as elegant a phrase for Mead's intentions as one is likely to find. Then, in his critique of Mead's 1903 position — and Joas seldom accepts *any* argument at face value — he claims that "Its importance [the definition of the psychical] seems to me to lie in the fact *that Mead linked the objective rootedness of the psychical in the structure of human action with the insight that psychology is essentially self-reflective in character*" (p. 87). In this article one finds Mead's unique blending of mundane observations, philosophical acuity, and neologism — something he seldom tempered for the reader's ease (except in his history of philosophy, delivered to undergraduates). Some of the principal passages reveal not only this hindrance to dissemination but also hint at Joas' enthusiasm for the article: "Is it possible to regard the psychical, not as a permanent phase, nor even a permanent possible aspect of consciousness, but as a 'moment' of consciousness or in a conscious process, and which has therefore cognitive value for that process?"[5]

Moving through the piece, we come to Mead's lyrical restatement of James' "Stream of Thought" chapter in his *Principles*, which Joas himself recasts as "a liquefaction of previously stable validities" (p. 82): "In which form do these contents appear when this disintegration and reconstitution takes place? . . . the kaleidoscopic flash of suggestion, and intrusion of the inapt, the unceasing flow of odds and ends of possible objects that will not fit, together with the continuous collision with the hard, unshakable objective conditions of the problem, the transitive feelings of effort and anticipation when we feel that we are on the right track and substantive points of rest, as the idea becomes definite, the welcoming and rejecting, especially the identification of the meaning of the whole idea with the different steps in its coming to consciousness

4. See Andrew J. Reck, ed., *George Herbert Mead: Selected Writings* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), pp. 142-149.

5. Joas, p. 78. In Reck's anthology, the page numbers are given as 77-112, but Joas refers always to pp. 1-38. This is because in the original, each page is numbered twice, 1-38 at the top and 77-112 at the bottom, since Mead's article is paginated internally as well as in relation to the entire *Decennial* volume. Also in this particular quote, Joas omits Mead's rhetorical question mark, perhaps slightly changing his intentions.

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— there are none of these that are not almost oppressively present on the surface of consciousness during just the periods which Dewey describes as those of disintegration and reconstitution of the stimulus — the object. No person who bemoans insoluble difficulties in front of him that does not paint the same picture, though with no such brilliant brush [*sic*]." (Mead, pp. 27,28/101-02) Following this outburst, Mead advances a less flammable mixture: "The disintegration of the object means a return, with references to a certain field, to the original phase of protoplasmic consciousness, and within these limits there is neither mind nor body, only subjectivity. The reconstruction is the immediate process of attention and apperception, of choice, of consciously directed conduct" (Mead, p. 32/106). And in a passage that Joas partially quotes, one clearly hears harmony with Fichte (and the young Marx, though Mead would not, of course, have been able to know of those manuscripts): "It is the act that makes use of all the data that reflection can present, but uses them merely as the conditions of a new world that cannot possible be foretold from them. It is the self of unnecessitated choice, of undreamt hypotheses, of inventions that change the whole face of nature" (Mead, p. 35/109). There is in all this a familiar friendliness that readers of Hegel, Fichte, and James quickly fasten on, but, as already explained, many other portions of the essay resist easy incorporation into today's mindset(s), for example: "There appears to be, therefore, a field of immediate experience within reflection that is open to direct observation, that does not have to be approached from the standpoint of parallelism, but which is a presupposition of that parallelism, as it is of all presentation of data, which voluntaristic psychology presupposes, but does not directly deal with, and for which there is arising the modern discipline of functional psychology. Over against this would still stand the parallelistic psychology as presenting the conditions under which empirical bodies and minds must act in the reconstructions arising within the field of the psychical. For this functional psychology an explicit definition of its subject-matter seems highly important. That suggested in this paper is as follows: that phase of experience within which we are immediately conscious of conflicting impulses which rob the object of its character as object-stimulus, leaving us in so far in an attitude of subjectivity; but during which a new object-stimulus appears due to the reconstructive activity which is identified with the subject 'I' as distinct from the object 'me.' " (Mead, p. 35/109) Since Mead reads more often like this than in his other, more "relaxed" mode — especially in his philosophy proper — one wonders if Joas' attempt to resuscitate these forgotten texts will yield the kind of response he might want.

He continues plumbing the depths in chronological fashion by taking apart some of Mead's 38 articles after "The Definition of the Psychical" (1903) and through "The Social Self" (1913). Again he believes that "symbolically mediated interaction" (Habermas' phrase that Joas used in the German edition, but omitted in this one) was slowly invented ("in distinct steps") by Mead, and in such a way that subsequent students of his work have not grasped. The "generally held image of Mead" (p. 90) is inapt regarding the formulation of "symbolic interaction" (Blumer's term that Mead never used): "a concept from which implications were to be drawn and utilized only much later, in symbolic interaction and in a reconstruction of historical materialism influenced by interaction theory" (p. 91). Joas insists on an important point, though hidden in an endnote, that "the thesis of the historical novelty of Mead's theory does not rest on the fact that he proposed simply some conception of intersubjectivity, but rather one that is tenable in light of anthropological knowledge" (p. 228, n. 4). Though mentioned here for the first time parenthetically, midway through the book, and prior

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to Joas' thematic examination of Mead's mature work, this contention turns out to be central to Joas' portrayal of Mead's achievement, and to his defence of Meadian social psychology as a vital tool for critical theory, that seeks at once to illuminate *inter*subjectivity and prescribe social structures in which a self of "unnecessitated choice" might flourish. For Joas Mead's theory works because it fits the ontogenesis of socialized consciousness into the phylogenesis of social structure, and without disturbing or over-interpreting the natural facts as they obviously arise. For Mead, deep-structure does not need to exist, even if it technically does, for the point of his work on the "psychical" is to allow the pre-theorized processes of socialization to guide theory-construction, and not vice-versa. This is its American quality, one that has ingratiated it recently to German theorists in search of a philosophically adept, democratically directive way of displaying subjectivity in political dress. But I am not sure any of this is right, "empirically" or "anthropologically," either Mead's formulae for representing the psyche's various "reconstructions" and "reconstitutions" of the subject-object, or Joas' confidence in Mead — his claim that such theorizing can be substantiated by reference to some forum of "natural" human activity. This is a vital point — one that calls for examination not so much of Mead's ideas on how humanity recreates itself intergenerationally, but on our current political hopes for democratic mechanisms as "naturally" inspired, which parallel Mead's own wishes — and, like others that Joas raises, cannot be resolved in a few lines.

This line of reasoning leads neatly into Joas' next chapter on Mead's ethics. The final chapter of Miller's *Mead* covers the same topic, betraying its author's work in philosophy, whereas Joas emphasizes the political meaning of a pragmatist ethics in preference to what is interpersonally significant. From this Joas ends the book with three dense chapters on perception, time, and the theory of science. Though Miller deals with each of these, too, with an especially good chapter on perception, Joas extends the range of discussion into some of Mead's unknown papers and also to current continental interests (e.g., those of Piaget, Kohlberg, Lenk, Apel, Wellmer, and others) who play little or no role in Miller's treatment. In Mead's theory of perception, Joas once again sees gold where others have noted only silver or copper: ". . . Mead, reflecting on a basic point in perceptual development, the so-called constitution of physical objects, elaborated the germ of a new theory, the significance of which has remained unrecognized to the present day" (p. 12). He claims similar findings for his chapter on time. Here, for once, his efforts receive indirect and unintended support from Miller, who also claims that "Not enough attention has been given to Mead's general outlook stated succinctly in *The Philosophy of the Present* as 'the principle of sociality' and the social nature of the present."[6] This is precisely what is pursued in these last several chapters, though Miller does not seem aware of Joas' book. But against Miller, one of Mead's interpreters who, says Joas, view him too much as a metaphysician, the "time" chapter makes the case that Mead's last work responded more to relativity theory than to sheer speculation, and that his late work on temporality is best connected to current issues facing developmental psychologists, and not limited to the Whiteheadian atmosphere of the 20s. Joas ends his struggle to broaden Mead's meaning with a provocative recovery of what "silence" and "rationality" meant for him. On the one hand he suffered the illusion of the age — by contrast, much more than Weber — that science and its method, even if heavily modified for use in psychology, showed the future prospects of organized "mind," i.e., history. But at the same time he demystified the process of

6. David L. Miller, ed., *The Individual and the Social Self: Unpublished Works of George Herbert Mead* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 12.

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scientific "advance," very much in keeping with today's ethos, by tying it into everyday concerns, as a human activity of a markedly mundane order.

Joas disclaims having written an exhaustive account since he did not essay Mead's debate with relativity theory, nor his output on the history of philosophy (including a 130-page manuscript on Aristotle, another 130-pages on Whitehead, 65-pages, single-spaced on Leibniz, etc.; see Miller's *Mead*, pp. 252-53), or his Deweyan writing on pedagogy. Yet even without treating these topics, he does manage a conceptual *aperçu* into a portion of Mead's works that uncovered a strong psychological-political bond between them: "I found that the key for my entire interpretation is the concept of *practical intersubjectivity* . . . Although it is not used by Mead himself, this term seems to me the best characterization of the core of Mead's thought and thus also of the element of that thought that attracted me so strongly to him. The concept of "intersubjectivity" designates a structure of communicative relations between subjects, a structure that is suited for transcending, on the theoretical plane, the opposition between the individualistic bias in the theory of action and a structural theory that does not recognize subjects or human agency. The political correlate of this concept is a social order in which the atomization of individuals is eliminated, not through their subordination to a collectivity, but instead through the participation of all in reasoning discussion to determine their common future." (p. 13)

This passage gives frank statement to the book's *raison d'être*,and is full of pathos — that of the German Left searching for a nonMarxist "grounding" for amiable, but effective political action *qua* communication. If Berlin in 1975 was not Chicago in 1910, there was enough substantial intimacy between the obstacles to democratic discourse that Mead would have gladly accepted Joas' reformulation of his ideas to suit more recent political, emotional, and intellectual life. Yet one could ask if this ploy does not throw political concerns back into the bourgeois armchairs that comforted Spencer while discomfitting Marx. Joas writes defensively when confronted by recent Marxist psychologies (e.g., Holzkamp's) and their handling of subjectivity as merely "objectively given meanings" (p. 88). But there still hangs over the entire Meadian enterprise, taken politically, the undeniable tendency to equate structure with microprocess, or ignore it altogether, at least when writing theory.[7] Recall Joas' own interpolation, "a structure that is suited for transcending, *on the theoretical plane*, the opposition . . ." (emphasis added). There is little point in overdoing this since such attacks on Mead by now amount to "cheap shots." But Joas' apparent need to escape monological Marxism of the kind that briefly dominated sections of German intellectual life, and his turn to Mead, cannot attenuate the tension within Mead's life and work, best captured in Bourne's iconoclastic attack on pragmatism's blinders during wartime. It may in the end prove to have been a grand illusion to believe that a philosophically wise, psychologically adequate theory of social interaction could be brought alongside political theory and joined seamlessly. Perhaps to his German admirers, Mead seems the only bridge over these troubled antinomies, but in the U.S., his "macro-uses" still retain the opaque quality obvious in another centext to Bourne sixty years ago.

Joas has put together an unusual document, patiently assembled arcana set within issues that inflame scholars and political actors as much now as in Mead's lifetime. The book is not for beginners: e.g., "Against Ward's theory Mead makes the objection that the transformation of the determinations of the transcendental ego of the idealist

7. See Anselm Strauss' introduction to *G.H. Mead on Social Psychology* (revised edition; University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. xiiiff for information on this debate.

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philosophical tradition into those of the empirical ego of psychology . . ." (p. 76), a victim of sclerosis of the "of." But it is ungenerous to fault a German study of an American whose own work is often unclear. There remains the task of pointing out certain of the book's additional components that seems especially important either to a reworked Meadianism for its own sake, or to psycho-political questions that Joas raises that Mead may be able to help answer.

One of the most impressive results for Joas of having adopted a Diltheyan approach to his task is establishing continuities in Mead's life and work that do not surface so clearly in previous studies. After college at Oberlin, Mead quickly lost a teaching job, found work in the far north as a railroad surveyor, and took solace in Kant. His fondness for the precision of scientific method, it is said, originated in teaching himself how to survey quite accurately, and his lifelong debate with idealist epistemology, culminating in his theories of time, perception, and the rationality of science through communal action, also began in his drifting twenties. He soon thereafter shed the official raiments of Christian ethics that had dictated his youth. But the desire somehow to retain certain fundamentals, e.g., "love [*agape*] as an impulse to action," the "supreme emotion of life" (Joas, p. 21), free of dogma, stayed with him. Also in 1891, only 28 and impressed with German psychology, he wrote that "the child's early moral development" is "the most important of all research fields" (p. 19). These attractions — morally binding social action, the reliable, democratically-tested exactness of science, and the social origins of ethical conduct — organized his entire approach. In 1927, with four years to live, he lectured: "Man is a rational being because he is a social being. The universality of our judgments, upon which Kant places so much stress, is a universality that arises from the fact that we take the attitude of the entire community of all rational beings" (*Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 379; see also Joas, pp. 122; 231, n. 3). As Joas enjoys pointing out, such an interrelating of rationality, science, and communal life allows Mead to sidestep most traditional epistemological and ethical conundrums, while at the same time strengthening the emancipatory stream as it was then developing.

Perhaps most relevant for current concerns is Mead's ability with his special pragmatism to minimize the subject-object split and also show that "subjectivity," properly taken, is not responsible for the "dragon or bogy of skepticism" that dogs much social thought (*Movements of Thought*, p. 76). Only an American of his time would have synthesized observation of the German labor movement, the *Geisteswissenschaften* of the 1880s, and the political chances theoretically available to people distanced from rigid European class structure. The Social Democrats showed him what Chicago might become, and Dilthey's main concept, "life," gave him scope. He spent his career trying to control that "remnant of arbitrariness" (Joas, p. 31) in social life that sabotages plans for a "completely rational" world in which an "uncurtailed notion of rationality" would prevail (p. 59). And in so doing he came very close to restating (unknowingly) a Marxist argument (p. 36f), not something often associated with apolitical "symbolic interactionism."

By early accepting Hegel's dialectics as synonymous with truly scientific method, and recognizing that it represented intellection "in its highest form," Mead converted philosophy from lifeless irrelevance into "a statement of the method by which the self in its full cognitive and social content meets and solves its difficulties" (p. 60). This innovative use of a post-Romantic "self" that disposed both of ultra-rationalism and mysticism also informed his reading of 19th century thought and political history, and by being enlarged to embrace macro-events overcame the drift toward solipsism that

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Mead feared in Hegel's later work. But he followed Hegel when in the singular "Nature in Aesthetic Experience" (1926) he took the same refuge in art — that balm for sufferers of the "incurably contingent" (p. 207) — which seems inevitable once the theorist faces what the industrialization of existence actually entails: "Under the most favorable conditions, one cannot say under normal conditions, a man's work would be in itself interesting, and apart from the immediate interest in the operation, the sense of the whole that he is completing would grow with the advancing production, and give him aesthetic delight." (p. 213) And from the next line, not in Joas' presentation: "The imagery which would provide this comes from the stream of reverie . . ." He concludes with Joyce's *Ulysses*, the most "gruesomely presented" private mental functioning in search of release from trapped being.

All this suggests a new, fuller Mead, at least for those who put their faith in the fragmentary evidence Joas has supplemented. A decisive ingredient is Mead's cheery Americanism. He knew the same literature as his European counterparts, but probably because of his ministerial lineage, had no use for the elegant foreboding that Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer had marketed. For example, he discounted Freud's repression theory of culture and held that impulse satisfaction could be mediated for the collective good through "open exchange and discussion" and "reorientation" (p. 119). Rationality's sovereign indivisibility united selves into orderly and progressive structure — a "commonwealth of rational beings" — and quite naturally, without Pyrrhic costs (pp. 128ff). To fail somehow in this produced a "crisis of the entire personality," and by extension, of society at large. Only by encouraging democracy, what Mead called "institutionalized revolution" (p. 138), and its communicatively unconstrained methods of problem-solving, could rationality realize its potential size and strength. And tied into this, but more with an eye to theory proper, is the theory or perception, which "Mead roots . . . in a common praxis of subjects, not — as Blumer does — in a merely verbal communication about definitions that is unrelated to praxis, nor — as Kohlberg — in a presocial cognitive dimension of the individual development, and, lastly, not — as Habermas — in a communication that is severed from active engagement with nature, and only subsequently, in the framework of a theory of evolution, refers normative problems to the problems of economic systems." (p. 166)

Finally, we come to Mead's "least intelligible" (p. 167) contribution, his theory of temporality and relativity. Joas holds that Mead's ideas supplant both Piaget's and Heidegger's, in the effort to contravene an "undifferentiated now." From *The Philosophy of the Act* (p. 266), Joas selects this summary passage: "It is evident that it is the formation of the physical object which is responsible for the appearance of the individual as an object, since it brings contemporaneity and also brings the possibility of the distinction between rest and motion, and the separation of space and time, and thus constitutes a new environment answering to the new individual. In other words, contemporaneity can arise only as distant objects which are future in their import can be brought hypothetically into the contact field, and so become physical objects."

Mead understood that "objectivity" no more exists than its putative opposite. Rather, all we have is "interpretation," and the strongest are collective. He wanted to establish "rational ethical and esthetic values" (p. 199), but only via that intersubjective play which could provide an "unfractured universe" (208) crucial to societal coherence. What continues to excite close readers like Joas is Mead's willingness, so distinct from today's mandarins, to say everything he knew, not merely what suited his audiences. Joas isolates one such passage: "The order of the universe that we live in *is* the moral order. It has become the moral order by becoming the self-conscious method of the

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members of a human society. We are not pilgrims and strangers. We are at home in our own world, but it is not ours by inheritance but by conquest. The world that comes to us from the past possesses and controls us. We possess and control the world that we discover and invent. And this is the world of the moral order." (p. 128) For some reason that only Joas knows, he did not put to use Mead's next and last line: "It is a splendid adventure if we can rise to it."

**Alan Sica**

## Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, translated by Robert Chandler, (Harper & Row: New York, 1986), 880 pp., $22.50.*

Rethinking his own literary fate shortly before his death, the Soviet writer Vasily Grossman (1905-1964) said: "They smothered me in a blind alley." And indeed, in Grossman's case Soviet censorship apparently triumphed. His most important works, the novels *Forever Flowing*[1] and *Life and Fate*, were never published in the USSR. Moreover, the manuscript of *Life and Fate* was confiscated: not only all the existing copies of the manuscript, but even the carbon paper and the typewriter ribbons used in typing his novel.

In 1963, after repeatedly requesting the return of his manuscript, Grossman finally obtained an interview with the "chief ideologist," Mikhail Suslov. The latter, branding the novel "ideologically harmful," declared that such a work might be published not earlier than in 200 years' time. That conversation was destined to enter the history of Russian literature alongside the similar exchange between Tsar Nicholas I and Pushkin or Stalin's telephone call to Pasternak: the powers that be sentencing literature. Reflecting on Suslov's statement, another Soviet writer, Boris Jampolski, saw in it the "unspeakable arrogance of power" secure in its dominion over the future as well as the present.[2] Vladimir Vojnovich, for his part, culled from the same words the certainty of a long life for the novel.[3]

That conversation had, however, a consequence unforseen by Suslov. In fact, wrote a close friend of Grossman, "the day the novel was confiscated could be considered the beginning of a new literary life, a new era of *samizdat*. The writers understood that they could not hide their works in one basket . . . and the readers understood that they had a part to play in preserving the literature and in fighting for the freedom of the press."[4] Shortly before his death, Grossman clandestinely completed his last novel, *Forever Flowing*, and smuggled the manuscript to the West where it was later published in many languages. Copies of the Russian edition trickled into the Soviet Union where they were multiplied and distributed by the readers in the form of *samizdat*.

The confiscated manuscript of *Life and Fate* met with an equally happy end, thus confirming the celebrated credo of Mikhail Bulgakov that "manuscripts do not burn." In

*Translated by Arthur Bierman.

1. Vasily Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, translated by Thomas P. Whitney, (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
2. Boris Jampolski, "Poslednyaya vstrecha s Grossmanom," *Kontinent*, 8, 1976, p. 140.
3. Vladimir Vojnovich, "Zhizn i sudba V. Grossmana i ego romana," *Possev*, 11, 1984, p. 53.
4. Natalya Roskina. *Chetyre glavy* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1980), p. 118.

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1974 a copy of the manuscript mysteriously turned up in Vojnovich's hands. And as he put it: "After reading this masterpiece I decided that for no reason in the world must it run the risk of disappearing forever, and, without anyone's permission or approval, I found a way to send it to the West."[5] Between 1983 and 1986 the novel was published in French, Italian, German, English and other languages. In Germany the thousand-page-long edition sold over 10,000 copies in the first week alone.

Grossman's literary work follows the great tradition of Nineteenth Century Russian literature known as "critical realism." Pasternak aptly captured the ethical stand of that movement when he wrote that "the inability to tell the truth is a flaw for which no skill in telling the untruth can ever atone."[6] This sentiment applied perfectly to Grossman "whose mind always ran the same course, hungering for nothing but the truth."[7] Grossman always addressed the great tragedies of his epoch: forced collectivization, the Second World War, Stalin's and Hitler's concentration camps, the Holocaust of the Jewish world, the omnipotence of the state in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union. And it is difficult to find in Russian literature a clearer portrait and a more profound analysis of these momentous events.

Grossman recognized that he wrote for the readers of the future. He anticipated that much of the horror he had witnessed would some day be denied. Some will declare that the Nazis never massacred the Jews, that the Holocaust was but an invention of Zionist propaganda. Others will maintain no mass famine followed the collectivization of the 1930's in the Soviet Union. The witnesses will die out; documents will be doctored or will disappear altogether . . . Grossman had more grounds than anyone for such profound pessimism. The Soviet census of 1937, which would have documented the death of millions of peasants during the collectivization was never published, while its demographer-authors perished in the labor camps, and the few data that were eventually published were falsified. Grossman's mother was killed by the Nazis in the Berdichev camp, and he was the first Soviet man of letters to minutely describe the extermination of the Soviet Jews by the Nazis in *The Black Book*, written with Ilya Ehrenburg. It was also suppressed and finally saw the light of day decades later in Israel. Thus, Grossman wrote to preserve the historical memory, fulfilling what he considered every writer's foremost duty.

Grossman's depiction of the crash collectivization in the USSR is the best available in either fictional or sociological literature, clarifying how high a price the population paid for this "revolution from above." What was hidden behind the words "collectivization," "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" in many regions of the Soviet Union, above all in the Ukraine where the peasants' resistance to forced collectivation was particularly intense? In order to fulfill the obligatory deliveries of grain to the state they confiscated "the entire seed fund. Grain was searched for as if it were not grain but bombs and machine guns" while the peasants of the Ukraine, the Don, and the Kuban were literally "put to death by starvation."[8] Then the Stalinist administration cut off the countryside from the world outside: "There were blockades along all the highways, where militia, NKVD men, troops were stationed; the starving people were not to be allowed into the cities. Guards surrounded all the railroad stations. There were guards at even the tiniest of whistle stops."[9] Grossman recorded the testimony of the eyewit-

5. Vojnovich, *op. cit.*, 53.
6. Boris Pasternak, "Neskolko polozhenii," *Sovremennik*, 1, 1922, p. 6.
7. Roskina, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
8. *Forever Flowing*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
9. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

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nesses with utmost realism, echoing the survivors' voices and without ever falling into pathos. And the survivors recalled how the villages struggled against hunger: "And now they ate anything at all. They caught mice, rats, snakes, sparrows, ants, earthworms. They ground up bones into flour, and did the same with leather and shoe soles; they cut up old skins and furs to make noodles of a kind, and they cooked glue. And when the grass came up, they began to dig up the roots and eat the leaves and the buds; they used everything there was: dandelions, and burdocks, and bluebells, and willowroot, and sedums, and nettles and every other kind of edible grass and root and herb they could find. They dried out linden leaves and ground them into flour — but there were too few linden in our region. The pancakes made from the linden leaves were greenish in color and worse than those made of acorn flour."[10] After everything edible was gone, real starvation arrived: the first to go were the children and the aged, then the adults: "The women turned out to be stronger and more enduring than the men. They had a tighter hold on life."[11]

Grossman tried above all to gather concrete details, the unimaginable particulars, as when he jotted down the words of the secret service functionary remembering how in the regional committees they came to call the starving villages "model cemeteries." In the eyewitnesses' stories one recalls the images of a medieval plague: the corpses piled up in the streets and the farmyards, while the last to die remained in the thatched *izbas* because there no longer was anyone to drag them outside. A survivor recalled how the next year new settlers were brought in from Orel province: When they had removed the corpses from the huts, they brought in the womenfolk to clean the floors and to whitewash the walls. Everything was done as it was supposed to be done. But the stink remained. They whitewashed a second time, and they spread new clay on the floors, but the stink remained. They were unable either to eat or sleep in those huts, and they returned to Orel Province."[12]

The most stunning aspect of the famine was the common knowledge that it was engineered with premeditation. As Malcolm Muggeridge, maybe the most perspicacious journalist among the host of foreign correspondents working then in the Soviet Union, recorded: "This particular famine was planned and deliberate; not due to any natural catastrophe like failure of rain, or cyclone, or flooding. An administrative famine brought about by the forced collectivization of agriculture."[13] Stalin "intentionally, deliberately killed people by starvation" and even decades later Grossman's survivors could not fathom why: "And it was impossible to understand, grasp, comprehend. For these children were Soviet children, and those who were putting them to death were Russians. And the government was a government of workers and peasants. Why this massacre?"[14] In official Soviet literature, even 30 years after Khrushchev's famous "secret speech," which was as much a smokescreen as Stalin's denunciation, this question has never been answered.

At the time of collectivization the Stalinist administration launched a massive disinformation campaign in the country and the West. For foreign guests, there were special trips to the children's playgrounds in the "model" collective farms to see the well-fed and happy children, while every newspaper published the statements of the illustrious visitors. Grossman records the anger of an old peasant who read of the usual tour by a French official to a collective farm nursery school in a region where the famine was at

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
13. Malcolm Muggeridge, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, v. 1. (London: Collins, 1972), p. 257.
14. *Forever Flowing*, pp. 155-156.

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its worst and said to the farm chairman: "When Nicholas was Czar, the whole world wrote about the famine and was urged to give: 'Help, help! The peasantry is dying.' And you Herods, you child-killers, are showing off Potemkin villages, making theater out of it!"[15] What news of the famine that did reach the West, was successfully repudiated by such luminaries as George Bernard Shaw who, after his trip to the USSR in 1933, declared that "he had never eaten so well as in Moscow," or Lion Feuchtwanger, who found in the Soviet Union a great variety of food available at low prices which, permitted even the people with modest incomes to entertain "an unexpected guest with surprising lavishness."[16]

Grossman's novel *Forever Flowing* passed almost completely unnoticed in the West. The book's failure is not sufficiently explained by the fact that it was not pleasant reading: Grossman's vision is not more horrifying than images of Auschwitz, of Pol Pot's terror, of tortures in Argentina. But Grossman's horror is undiluted and unpurified by catharsis or historical vengeance meted out to the criminals. Having presented a clear and relentless portrait of the collectivization and engineered famine, Grossman, like Dostoevsky before him, poses some simple but disquieting questions: "Can it really be that no one will ever answer for everything that happened? That it will all be forgotten without even any words to commemorate it?"[17] The writer reminds us that the organizers of the terror, guilty of crimes so atrocious as to be almost without historical precedent, were never punished in life nor condemned after death. The vengeance that struck Nazi leaders and the Nuremberg trials are but rare exceptions to the rule. But what of Stalin and Molotov, or closer yet of Pol Pot? In the USSR today the glorification of Stalin is still gathering steam. Mikhail Gorbachev has recently, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the victory over Nazism, cited him as the glorious leader of the Soviet war effort and the praise of Stalin as a WWII hero virtually flooded the Soviet press.[18] One of the chief organizers of the 1930's famine, 95-year old Molotov, has just been rehabilitated by the Communist party and readmitted to its ranks.

Grossman's novels break abruptly from the iconography of terror that developed in Soviet literature and signal a return to the moral stand of the great Russian writers of the 19th century. Classic Russian literature, in describing the terror and violence of power, always identified with the victims and unfailingly sided with "the insulted and the injured." Post-revolutionary Soviet literature broke with this tradition: it abounds with works celebrating "revolutionary violence" in which terror is defined as the fastest and most certain agent of social transformation and construction of a better and more just society. There appeared a whole series of novels in which the functionaries of the security organs played the role of positive heroes, of martyrs compelled to carry out a heavy and unpleasant but nonetheless socially indispensable task of exterminating the "enemies of the people."

A representative specimen of this type of literature was authored in 1934 by a group of Soviet writers led by Maxim Gorky about the construction of the Belomor Canal, manned by prisoners.[19] This collective "documentary novel" was a hymn to forced

15. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

16. See Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims. Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba. 1928-1978*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 118-120, 370.

17. *Forever Flowing*, p. 166.

18. For a recent example of Stalin's apology see Yuri Tyruin, "Parad," *Moskva*, 1, 1985, also serialized in one of the major newspapers.

19. *Belomor: An Account of the Construction of the New Canal Between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea*, (New York, 1935).

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labor, which the authors considered a just means of reeducation, capable of transforming both common criminals and political prisoners into citizens worthy of the new society. In the end, the excavation of the Belomor Canal cost the lives of many thousand prisoners; moreover, the canal constructed according to a senseless project was immediately abandoned and never used.[20] In the book written by thirty-four authors there is not the slightest hint of the real price paid for the enterprise.

No less representative of the Soviet literature in the 1930s were the notorious novels of Bruno Jasenski, a Polish futurist poet converted to socialist realism. His novels, *A Man Changes His Skin* and *The Conspiracy of the Indifferent*, are the most authentic apologia for pervasive suspicion, secret denunciation and mass terror. Jasenski coined a definition of the "enemy of the people" that epitomized the ethos of the Stalinist epoch: an enemy of the people need not be a saboteur, or an anti-Soviet agitator, or even an indifferent worker who botched the state plan. Paradoxically, the most dangerous enemy disguised himself as a productive and disciplined worker who avowed the Party line with the prospect of some pernicious sabotage in the future. And only the security organs could be trusted to separate the friend of the Soviet state from the foe. Thus, the secret police assumed the mantle of divine omniscience and infallibility, and an arrest already constituted proof of guilt. The security forces, however, needed the collaboration of the population. According to Jasenski, the "great purge" and mass terror were indispensable to combat "the conspiracy of the indifferent." The indifferents were all those who did not denounce their own neighbors, who failed to actively help the police tear the mask from the enemy's face.[21]

In a panorama so crowded by authors who out of sincere fanaticism or simple servility justified and celebrated mass terror, Grossman's case was truly unique in Soviet literature. Grossman recognized as his main task both to depict Soviet society gripped by mass terror and to grasp the real meaning of "what had looked like chaos, insanity, self-destruction, the concatenation of unfortunate circumstances, the events whose mysterious, tragic meaninglessness had driven people mad . . ."[22] Like many others in his generation, the writer was especially stupefied by one enigmatic, almost mystical characteristic of the Stalinist terror and mulled over the question of why the victims in Stalin's jails were coerced to "confess" and sign their interrogators' protocols: "Subjecting its victims to dreadful tortures that lasted for days, weeks, months, and sometimes years, the state security machine compelled unhappy bookkeepers, engineers, agronomists to play a part in its theatrical productions, to assume the roles of traitors, scoundrels, foreign agents, terrorists, wreckers. Millions of people have asked why this was done."[23] In order to find an answer to this question and to strip the Stalinist terror of its morbid mystique, Grossman scrupulously analyzes the organization of mass terror and compares the mechanisms of Stalin's terror with Hitler's.

Writers like Jasenski presented a very peculiar picture of Soviet society in the 1930s.

20. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, v. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 80-102.

21. Jasenski's end recalls that of his heroes. He was arrested on the basis of an informer's report and died in prison in 1941. In his prison writings he proved unable to apply his own theories consistently. While continuing to justify the terror against others, he even declared himself innocent, as if they were not the "infallible" Cheka agents arresting and unmasking him. The fate of Jasenski's literary estate is another paradox; his *The Conspiracy of the Indifferent*, praising the Stalinist terror, was published for the first time in 1956, in the wake of the de-Stalinization process, as the novel of a "victim of unjustified repression."

22. *Flowing Forever*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

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They distinguished a select and heroic group of agents of the security apparatus, the organizers and professional executors of the terror, and a large group of active informers. To these two categories they contraposed a group of omnipresent and elusive "enemies of the people" and their allies — the indifferent, who for some suspicious reason did not share the common bloody enthusiasm of denunciation. In Grossman's novels the terrorized society appears altogether different. The incalculable mass of detainees is both the product and the foundation of the mass terror machine. The victims come from all walks of life representing all possible social strata and groups. A common characteristic of these prisoners was that by no stretch of the imagination could they explain, to themselves or to others, what crime they had perpetrated. There was nothing, in fact, that distinguished them from the people on the other side of the barbed wire: all were subject to the same propaganda and perverse logic promulgated by a terroristic state to feed mass terror. Thus, the very victims of mass terror insisted on its necessity: according to the propaganda, spies and enemies were everywhere, and the prisoner, knowing himself innocent, could not but agree.

The executioners and the guards were the cogs in the machine that came into direct contact with the victims. The executioner could be a mild-mannered oldtimer who asked his victim for permission to donate his clothes to the orphanage, or he could be the sadist who, after losing the job, began to tour the slaughter houses butchering hogs and taking home bottles of blood to cure his anemia. The guards in both Stalin's and Hitler's camps were not to a man evil: "they merely treated their prisoners like cattle, and that was that."[24]

Grossman pays special attention to the informers, practitioners of the only private initiative encouraged by the state during mass terror when "it was so easy to do a man in: you wrote a denunciation; you did not even have to sign it."[25] For every prisoner there was an informer and sometimes several, so that for the millions of prisoners there existed many millions of informers. Involving an enormous group of citizens in the terror, the state not only maintained the mass character of the phenomenon, but also shored up a base of support among its beneficiaries. Grossman distinguishes various "ideal types" of informers, acting out of fear or ideological fanaticism, but more often out of private interest, envy and greed for the victim's property. In the extraordinary scene of an imagined trial of the informers none of the accused admit guilt. The informers justify their actions claiming that "the state foredoomed these people to death, and our work, so to speak, was concerned only with the superficial framework. In essence, what and how we wrote . . . these people were foredoomed by the state."[26] The informer's lawyer denies the concept of individual guilt altogether: "Do you realize that the powerful magnetic field created by our state, that its mass, with a weight of trillions of tons, and the superfear and supersubmissiveness which it induces in the human speck of dust are such as to make ridiculous any and every charge directed against a weak and defenseless individual human being? It is absurd to condemn a bit of fluff for having fallen to earth."[27] This sort of rationalization held wide currency in the Soviet Union during the de-Stalinization period under Khrushchev, when the survivors began to return from the Gulag: one argued that in the Stalinist period it was impossible to act differently. The guilt was everyone's and, hence no one's.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 78. Characteristically in the recent Polish trial of the assassins of the priest Popieliuszko the killers used similar arguments in their defense.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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The analysis of the activity of the security forces that created the terror and in turn were created by it occupy a special place in Grossman's books. Their particular function made such an indelible impression upon their men and methods that it no longer made sense to speak of distinct national characteristics or of a difference between the Gestapo and the NKDV (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). Indeed, the parallelisms and similarities match with such perfection that barring some indication of language or location the reader would often be unable to tell which of the two organizations Grossman was describing. Grossman paints an entire gallery of people employed in the Soviet or Nazi security organs, also singling out several "ideal types," from the obtuse and limited tools ready to "kill father and mother just following orders" to the "merry artisans" of terror gifted with "the most refined scientific cruelty." The latter, totally lacking morality, were given to thinking about the world as a personal project and humanity as a simple means for realizing their own plans or an obstacle to demolish. They killed without anger or compassion. The old Cheka agent, "the poet of the secret service" convinced that "the camp will eventually converge with the life outside," explains the *modus operandi* of his organization: "the concept of personal innocence is a hangover from the Middle Ages. Pure superstition! Tolstoy declared that no one in the world is guilty. We Chekists have put forward a more advanced thesis: 'No one in the world is innocent.' Everyone is subject to our jurisdiction. If a warrant has been issued for your arrest, you are guilty — and a warrant can be issued for everyone."[28]

Having described the structure of Soviet society during the period of terror, Grossman analyzes the techniques of terror. The state proceeds statistically, identifying and suppressing certain social groups that, given some imaginary circumstances, were most likely to oppose it. These groups could be singled out according to diverse criteria, but always in perfect agreement with the current official doctrine of social development: they could be identified by religion and ethnic origin, like the Jews, or by social origin or income, like the nobility and the kulaks. Identification by age is also a possibility. A famous 19th Century Russian revolutionary theoretician Piotr Tkachev declared once that persons over 25 years old would be so corrupted by the old social order as to become completely useless for a post-revolutionary society. What in the 19th Century appeared an extravagant statement became much closer to reality under the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.

When the choice fell on an imaginary group to be "formed" in real life, as in the case of the kulaks or "the enemies of the people," the selection of persons to be suppressed was entrusted to the secret police, local authorities and informers. Once the target was established, it was necessary to "awaken in the population aversion and hate." In such an atmosphere the Nazis organized and carried out the slaughter of the Jews and Stalin conducted the campaign "to annihilate the kulaks as a class" or to eliminate the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites.

Upon observing the behavior of the population during the period of state-imposed terror, Grossman reached the same conclusion as the psychologist Stanley Milgram in his later experiments on obedience and conformism that "the majority of the population will hypnotically obey any order of the authorities." The writer searches for the cause of such obedience and resignation, but refuses to accept the generic psychological explanation according to which submission is characteristic of human nature. Rather, the cause is born with the new social systems which, using terror on a truly

28. *Life and Fate*, *op. cit.*, p. 635.

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industrial scale, succeed in "paralyzing the human spirit on entire continents." The survival instinct, the hypnotic power of grand projects and revolutionary ideologies, the violence of the totalitarian state — these are three forces which, according to Grossman, combine to produce the obedience of the populations in countries as different in their history and culture as Russia and Germany.

In a recent, collective monograph on the role of terror in contemporary communist societies,[29] the authors emphasize the tardiness of academic scientists in analyzing the phenomenon of mass terror, even if the 20th Century has furnished examples of state-engineered political terror unrivalled in scope and atrocity. The authors examine some fundamental theories that explain the role of terror and of the secret police in Soviet-type systems. They cite the theory of totalitarianism that explains the use of terror as a means of achieving "totalitarian unity" and guaranteeing the triumph of a single-party system; the theory of structural functionalism, which considers terror an instrument which political power rationally manipulates in order to achieve desired social transformations; the theory of traditional political culture that stresses a similarity between pre- and post-revolutionary societies; and finally, the personality theory that identifies the use of terror with the personality of the leader striving for absolute power. Having analyzed the role of terror and of the secret police in the USSR, China, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Cambodia, the authors of the volume try to formulate a synthetic theory capable of explaining the sociological, psychological and historical aspects of mass terror. As Adelman concludes, the theory most salient to such a synthesis is structural functionalism which "emerges as the best theory to explain a complex and varied reality of terror and secret police in Communist states." It is change-oriented and it emphasizes the key factors of social change and bases of political support ignored by other theories.[30] This structural-functional approach should be complemented by additional theories accounting for the cultural and historical characteristics of a given society, the leaders' personalities, the role of the political culture, and the international situation at the time.

Grossman, too, looks for a general theory of mass terror. His conclusions differ markedly from Adelman's, which is not surprising as they are based on different experience. Grossman attempts to integrate an objective social analysis of mass terror in different socio-political systems with his personal experience as a survivor. Comparing the Stalinist and Hitlerian systems, he pays particular attention to the growth and development of the one-party state for which terror is, simultaneously, a necessary condition for its birth and a means of stabilization and perpetuation. Grossman is not prepared to drop the idea of the totalitarian state while he recognizes the need for a functional approach in analyzing totalitarianism: terror is functional for any totalitarian state because this state must destroy human solidarity and block any possible transactions between citizens except those sanctioned by the state. Such a state embodies the tradition of "nonfreedom" and the chances for its emergence are greatest where the traditions of slavery and serfdom are still deeply rooted. A totalitarian state combines technological progress with a progressive diminution of individual freedom: "The Leninist synthesis of nonfreedom and socialism shook the world more violently than the discovery and release of atomic energy."[31] A one-party, totalitarian state cannot survive without enemies, for without enemies — both outside and lurking within

29. Jonathan R. Adelman (ed.), *Terror and Communist Politics: The Role of the Secret Police in Communist States*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).
30. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
31. *Forever Flowing*, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

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the main pillars of the state — the army and the secret police become irrelevant. After disposing of its real adversaries the state must create others, using the calculus of probabilities or even purely arbitrary means. The distinction between guilt and innocence disappears. Thus, Grossman describes a scene both typical and grotesque: a man who really produced and disseminated anti-Soviet leaflets was arrested by the security organs. This seemed so incredible that crowds of security agents, from the lowest ranks to the top, came by to marvel at someone arrested "for due cause."[32]

At this point, Grossman uncovers the reasoning behind Chief Procurator Vyshinsky's declaration that the confession of the accused is the decisive proof of guilt and the persistence of the security organs in compelling their victims, through terrible torture, to "confess" and admit their participating in "cooked-up, imaginary, nonexistent plots." The state is sufficiently coercive to "appoint" the guilty but, if the individual resists, the state's power is limited. The totalitarian state craves absolute submission and can obtain it only by torture. The true triumph of state power is confirmed when the innocent confesses his own guilt and recognizes the infallibility of the state, when the individual renounces the freedom to assert his own innocence.

With his explanation, however, Grossman shows the limitations of the purely functional approach as applied to mass terror. The state can break a person's resistance with terror, but, at the same time, that person loses his spirit of initiative, his creativity and all those qualities that make an individual a productive member of industrial society. Mass terror tends to transform into a Golem, a blind force which no group or state can properly manipulate. Stalin's purge of the Red Army leadership brought the country to the brink of catastrophe. For Grossman this particular example demonstrates a larger truth: the functionality of mass terror for the state is inseparable from its disfunction. According to Grossman, "the history of human beings is the history of freedom, from less to more . . . the transition from less freedom to more freedom."[33] The emergence of huge totalitarian states in the Twentieth Century runs against the main stream of human history and should, therefore, be a temporary, transient, short-lived phenomenon. This conclusion is the basis of Grossman's historical optimism.

Many from the subsequent generations of Soviet intellectuals strongly disagree with Grossman's conclusions. They see that the Soviet one-party system based on the heavy use of terror is stable and is even spreading around the world. Moreover, the role of the coercive apparatus remains central in preserving totalitarian characteristics of Soviet-type societies. Thus, Alexander Zinoviev, who began his own work a decade after Vasily Grossman's death, maintains a completely opposite thesis, suggesting that the totalitarian state successfully cultivates a new personality that lacks the desire to be free. In Zinoviev's view, the universal and eternal triumph of the totalitarian state is, thus, assured.[34] Analyzing Western and Soviet ethical systems in a comparative study of respondents with Soviet and American backgrounds, Vladimir Lefebvre arrived at similar conclusions. He offers experimental and empirical arguments demonstrating that two different ethical systems are predominantly realized in Western and Soviet cultures even if in each culture there may exist subcultures belonging to another ethical system.[35] As a result of specific styles of upbringing and education, "the predominant ethical philosophy and the predominant normative character of an individual" in

32. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

33. *Forever Flowing*, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

34. Alexander Zinoviev, *The Yawning Heights*, translated by G. Clough, (London: Bodley Head, 1979), and *Homo Sovieticus* (London: Gallancz, 1985).

35. Vladimir Lefebvre, *Algebra of Conscience. A Comparative Analysis of Western and Soviet Ethical Systems*, (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982).

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these societies differ dramatically. Correspondingly, Lefebvre concludes, "the difference between Western society and Soviet society is much deeper than is usually assumed: this difference touches upon the fundamental structures connecting the categories of good and evil."[36] Much more study of the general problems of secret police, terror and coercion are needed to enable us to side with Vasily Grossman or his opponents in this dispute between two generations of Soviet intellectuals.

**Victor Zaslavsky**

36. *Ibid.*, p. XIII.

## Bruno Rizzi, *The Bureaucratization of the World*; Translated by Adam Westoby (The Free Press: New York, 1985), p. 111, $16.95.

Bruno Rizzi is one of those authors whose reputation is in inverse proportion to the number of people who have read his work. Indeed, in Rizzi's case it is in inverse proportion to those who have even seen his work. The translation by Adam Westoby of the first third of the book *La Bureaucratisation du Monde*, which is the source of his notoriety, can only make the situation worse. Now his reputation will be based on the opinions of people who *think* they have read his book.

Who was Bruno Rizzi and why is his name known while his work is not? He is known because he became involved in a dispute between a far more prominent figure, Leon Trotsky, and his followers — a dispute which had, and continues to have, an effect on anyone seriously concerned with the nature and origin of the new social system that arose in Russia in the thirties.

In 1937, several of Trotsky's supporters, notably James Burnham and Joseph Carter in America and Yvan Craipeau in France, raised objections to the continued reference to Russia as a workers' state, albeit a "degenerated" one, which had to be defended against capitalist attack because it continued to protect nationalized property. Basing themselves, in large measure, on Trotsky's own work, especially *The Revolution Betrayed* published in 1936, these dissidents argued that nationalized property had become the basis of a new class — the bureaucracy. The working class had been deprived of all rights and all control over this state property. The recent experience of the Moscow Trials, in which the pitiful remnants of the revolutionary generation had been broken and disgraced while throughout the country thousands of rank and file communist workers — the last survivors of the party that had made the 1917 revolution — were quietly shipped off to the camps, made this clear. Meanwhile, in Spain, the Russian "advisors" to the Republican government were organizing and leading the assault on labor organizations: in effect, they established there the same sort of totalitarian control over the working class as they had achieved in Russia.

It was in response to this debate that an unknown, isolated and, to put it charitably, eccentric Italian ex-socialist, Bruno Rizzi, published *La Bureaucratisation du Monde.* The significance of this book is *not* that Rizzi invented the idea that the bureaucracy was a

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new class. That claim had already been put forward by Burnham, Carter and Craipeau whose attacks on Trotsky were the starting point for Rizzi, as he himself makes clear in *La Bureaucratisation.* Westoby in his introduction to the English translation also recognizes this. In any case, the ideas were in the air and had long been put forward by others. What Rizzi did was to take *Trotsky's* argument that an economic system based on nationalized property was a progressive step forward for mankind, even if the nationalized property was controlled by a repressive, indeed, totalitarian, state and turn it into an open apology for Stalinism — and for fascism.

It is just this apologia which is practically eliminated in Westoby's translation. The last two sections in which this theme is developed *ad nauseam* are dropped and Westoby's introduction mentions Rizzi's pro-fascism and anti-semitism as if they were just personal aberrations instead of the central theme of Rizzi's book. The debate over Trotsky's equation "nationalized property =socialism" is not mentioned in the introduction. Even in a short review such as this, a brief outline of Rizzi's theories and, even more important, the political conclusions he drew from them, can indicate the extent to which the present translation bowdlerizes the original book.

Rizzi was, for a brief time, a member of the Italian socialist party. After Mussolini's rise to power he appears by all accounts to have dropped out of politics. The myth that he had something to do with Trotskyism — a myth begun by Trotsky himself — appears to have no other foundation than *Rizzi's* attempt to intervene in the 1937 debate. The Italian Trotskyists in emigration regarded him as politically abhorrent and suspected him of being a spy. This was before he wrote *La Bureaucratisation* and stemmed from his pro-fascism and not from his advocacy of a new class theory which was then supported by leading members of French and American Trotskyist groups. (See the exchange of letters in *La Contrat Social* for 1958, especially the letter from Pierre Naville, for a description of Rizzi's reception by the Italian Trotskyists.)

Rizzi earned his living as a shoe salesman (Westoby's introduction seems to indicate he was a pretty good one) and he traveled extensively throughout Europe in that capacity. The ease with which he entered and left Italy lent strength to the suspicions of socialists and other opponents of fascism concerning Rizzi, who attempted to counter this by claiming to have been a victim of police harrassment. At most, if his own accounts are to be taken seriously, this harrassment amounted to being arrested and let go after a couple of hours of questioning. The police never seem to have considered him a political oppositionist and in fact on a number of occasions he attempted to peddle his ideas to the fascist authorities as well as Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin personally. (He also liked Roosevelt's secretary of agriculture Henry Wallace but, as far as is known, did not send him his work.) Some light is thrown on Rizzi's attempts to portray himself as something other than a simple apologist for fascism if we look at the history of his book. It was impounded shortly after its publication and Rizzi claimed this was done by the Nazis after the fall of France. In fact, Westoby has discovered the evidence in court records that it was banned by the Popular Front government because of its viciously anti-semitic diatribes (in the sections Westoby has not translated.) Whatever one thinks, as a good civil libertarian, of the French government's practice then and now of press censorship, it does present a different picture of Rizzi and how people saw his book at the time it was originally banned, not by the Nazis for being pro-socialist, but by the French socialist government for being anti-semitic.

Rizzi's thesis was based on the proposition that the working class had failed. It had no further role to play except as an ally of fascism and Stalinism — of the new bureaucratic ruling class in any of its forms against the plutocracies (i.e, England and France).

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The rhetoric was similar to, and predated, the rhetoric of the Nazis and fascists during the Hitler-Stalin pact. Anti-imperialist denunciations reminiscent of socialist WWI anti-war propaganda were freely tossed about by Rizzi as they were later by the fascists and by their then allies in the Third International. Such attacks were directed exclusively at British and French capitalism.

The bureaucracy, not the working class, Rizzi claimed was to take over from a discredited capitalism mired in the depths of economic depression: "Socialism is, in the final analysis, an economy of distribution and division of products. It is not possible until production is so vast that any increase in consumption, even an increase in the requirements of the state, is met. Over production at present is nothing but the saturation of the capitalist market. To provide what is required for the inhabitants of the earth, the maximum production of 1929 has to be multiplied. A task of that kind cannot be met by capitalism and its supporters who, after having murdered 10 million men from 1914 to 1918, are of a mind to recommence what their 'immortal principles' demand. Such a task is assumed by the state and by the class which has the courage to make itself master of the state. Only the productivity of the state — not the speculation of individuals — rationalized, perfected, electrified can give a new impulse to production and achieve greater wealth for humanity . . . ." (*La Bureaucratisation du Monde*, p. 239-240). The class that was to exercise this mastery was the bureaucracy: "The possession of the State gives the bureaucracy possession of all goods, moveable and immoveable, which, in being socialized, do not any the less, belong 'in toto' to the new ruling class . . . . This new form of society resolves, from the social point of view, the unsustainable antagonism which renders capitalist society incapable of any progress. In capitalist society, the form of production has been collective for a long time, because the whole world takes part, directly or indirectly, in the production of every kind of good. But the appropriation of goods is individual, that in consequence precisely of private property. In socializing property and in submitting it effectively to the direction of a class, acting as a complex harmony, the antagonism that exists in the capitalist system is made to disappear, replaced by a new system." (*La Bureaucratisation*, p. 25, 26. In Westoby's translation this passage can be found on page 50.)

The task of the bureaucracy was to create the space for the full development of "the productive forces," to divide up the world into six or seven great "autarchies" which would provide adequate raw materials and markets for the new planned economy (not to mention a fantastic market for shoe salesmen).

What political consequences followed from this? "Far from us is the desire or wish to be brutal with respect to those little peoples who are highly civilized and live tranquilly and inoffensively. We believe it will not be necessary to sacrifice them completely and that they will of their own accord attach themselves to the autarchy that offers them the most favorable conditions of economic integration. But, if one wishes peace in the world and the growth of production, it is necessary to find a peaceful means to provide space and the raw materials necessary for the construction of the German and Italian autarchies. The sacrifice of the independence of some small state or other is a necessity long since proved for the development of the economy. Since the autarchy has as its aim economic organization and not political hegemony it will not even be wise to deal harshly in the matter of the customs, languages, culture and liberty of the populations." (*La Bureaucratisation*, p. 250.) This was written between the rape of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis and the dismemberment of Poland by Hitler and Stalin. Both of these actions were, as is well known, taken to preserve peace in the world.

Rizzi is the only political figure I know of who attempted to develop a full blown

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principled defense of the Hitler-Stalin Pact *before* it happened: "At this historical conjuncture, in order to provide space and raw materials for fascism and national socialism [Rizzi here refers to Russia — EH], that is to say, to divide the world in a rational manner and then exploit it rationally, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and the world proletariat must ally themselves to ward off the last blow of the old sorcerer of capitalism." (*La Bureaucratisation*, p. 314). "The proletariat must convince itself, and soon, that the fascist movements are a kind of anti-capitalist movement; they must demand an alliance with them . . . the proletariat (must) push for the creation of an anti-capitalist bloc to which it will adhere all the national anti-capitalist forces, that is to say the fascist forces which have detached themselves from capitalism and the petit-bourgeoisie who will provide the largest number of technicians for the new ruling class." (*La Bureaucratisation*, p. 324, 325.)

Nor did Rizzi flinch from advocating anti-semitism as the cement of such a worker-fascist alliance: "We respect and honor Marx and Trotsky and a few others of our obscure friends of the Jewish race. Certain isolated and very beautiful flowers can grow in dung heaps, but as a whole the Jewish people have become a capitalist pile of shit." (*La Bureaucratisation*, p. 300). Given this self-portrait, is it any wonder that the French and Italian Trotskyists who came in contact with Rizzi shunned him? How then did he come to be taken seriously by Trotsky?

In 1939, the Hitler-Stalin pact shattered the political calculations of all parties. Trotsky in particular was sent reeling. How could one continue to defend the USSR in this situation? Trotsky responded to his critics' attacks within his own movement by taking a self-contradictory position. The Stalinist bureaucracy is defending nationalized property and in this we must support it. However, it does not play a generally progressive role because it cannot spread this progressive system outside its borders. Only the organized working class which Stalin is destroying can do that. Nevertheless, his dissident supporters, again led by Carter and Burnham, pointed out that Stalin *was* setting up a statified system in occupied Poland; he was overthrowing capitalism. Unable to meet these objections, Trotsky counterattacked by dragging into the fray the unfortunate Rizzi whom the American Trotskyists had never heard and whose writings they knew only from the scattered quotes Trotsky included in his polemics.

If you say, Trotsky's argument went, that the bureaucracy is a new ruling class, then like Rizzi you must conclude that the working class is doomed. The bureaucracy, not the working class, is the wave of the future. The majority of the Trotskyist movement, disoriented by the pact between fascism and what they considered a workers' state, could not handle this attack.

Burnham, for one, simply collapsed. Within the year he had adopted the essentials of Rizzi's pro-fascist position, without the anti-semitism to be sure. (Westoby does do a good job of debunking the myth that Burnham plagiarized Rizzi, a myth which is still being repeated by, among others, John Gross, who reviewed this new translation for *The New York Times.* Outside of the fact that there is no evidence that Burnham or anyone else in the Western Hemisphere besides Trotsky had seen a copy of the book; and outside of the fact that Burnham's thesis that the managers, *not* the bureaucrats proper, were the new ruling class was counterposed to Rizzi's; there remains the fact that Burnham attacked the bureaucracy as a new class at least a year before Rizzi. Rizzi, by his own admission, was provoked to rethink the question of Russia by the debate initiated by Burnham, among others.)

Carter, however, the other participant in the 1937 debate, reacted to the Hitler-Stalin pact by thinking through the argument of Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed*. The issue was not the bureaucracy's sociological status. Whether it was a caste, class or Society of

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Friends, it was defending, tooth and nail, the collective property it had wrested from the working class against any and every private property owning class. It was extending that system where and when it could. Was that progress or not? Should socialists support that or not?

Trotsky himself, in the 1937 debate had made that the issue: "Now we learn that in place of the bourgeois society there has been established a new class society. Craipeau has not given it a name nor analyzed its internal laws. But that does not prevent us from seeing that this new society is progressive in comparison with capitalism, for on the basis of nationalized property the new 'possessing class' has assured a development of the productive forces never equalled in the history of the world. Marxism teaches, does it not, that the productive forces are the fundamental factor of historic progress. A society which is not capable of assuring the growth of the productive forces is still less capable of assuring the well being of the working masses, whatever may be the mode of distribution. The antagonism between feudalism and capitalism and the decline of the former has been determined precisely by the fact that the latter opened up new and grandiose possibilities for the stagnating progressive forces. The same applies to the USSR. Whatever its mode of exploitation may be, this new society is, by its very character, superior to capitalist society. There you have the real point of departure for Marxist analysis!" (Internal Bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party, 1937). Whether this was Marxism or not, it certainly posed the question under discussion sharply.

Westoby appears to be ignorant of this whole area of debate, although it is central to understanding Rizzi. In particular, he appears to be unaware of the decade-long dispute between Carter and Max Schactman. The latter was one of Trotsky's former adherents who by 1940 had been convinced that the bureaucracy in Russia was a new ruling class but that collectivist property represented "a new and more advanced form of property" in defense of which socialists might under certain conditions "fight in the army of Stalin." As Carter pointed out, such a position led politically to Trotsky's old conclusions.

Unlike Rizzi and Burnham and like most other leftists, Schactman simply dismissed the anti-capitalist claims of the fascists because capitalist property had not yet been finally liquidated. The awkward question raised by Rizzi — does fascist encroachment on capitalist property represent a progressive *tendency?* — was simply dodged by most socialists but not by all. Although fascists have generally suffered from a bad press since they lost WWII, they did attract significant "left" support during the depression. Such notables as G.B. Shaw and Lincoln Steffens were admirers of Mussolini and Hitler as well as Stalin, for much the same reasons that Rizzi was. Rizzi's isolation from any real movement or from the pressure of public opinion (the very fact that he was an eccentric crank) made it easier for him to state openly what playwrights and authors had to express more discreetly. (After writing this I reread some of Shaw's pronouncements on fascism. He was not all that discreet. But then he, too, was treated as an eccentric.)

Today it is not only Rizzi's pro-fascism that is out of date. The fascination with state-directed economic activity is not so much in vogue either. Westoby also takes note of this. He points out that Rizzi's sweeping statements are not specific. "He has little sense of the 'fine grain,' of the waste and inefficiency engendered by their [fascist and communist societies] routine brutality." That is to say, up close the appalling living and working conditions of the mass of the population in these societies give the lie to the bureaucracy's grandoise claims. To paraphrase Lincoln Steffens' famous crack "I have seen the future and it works" — it may or may not be the future, but it obviously does not work.

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Unfortunately, this minor cavil at the end of a long essay which minimizes the political significance and source of Rizzi's fascist sympathies is too little and too late. The state-worship Rizzi exemplifies is still with us. It accounts for the nervousness with which the majority of the left reacted to Polish Solidarity. After all, were not the Poles threatening nationalized property? While no one was eager to "fight in Jaruzelski's army" there was less reluctance to act as his PR person. In minimizing Rizzi's reactionary — but anti-capitalist — politics, by translating the rump of an important book, Westoby has contributed to the confusion that surrounds this whole matter.

**E. Haberkern**

Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came To Power*. (London: Verso, 1985) 430 pp. + xvii, $12.95.

David P. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983) 237 pp. + xvi, $27.00.

Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982*. (Boston: South End Press, 1984) 361 pp. + xiii, $10.00.

Cambodia played a major role in the anti-war movement and its struggle against the Nixon administration. Paradoxically, the anti-war movement knew nothing about Cambodia. Teach-ins, books and a flood of articles met the insatiable need for knowledge about Vietnam. There were many student experts on just about every aspect of Vietnam in the 1960s. With regard to Cambodia, only Sihanouk and the country's neutral status came immediately to mind. In the early 1970s, with the anti-war movement on the wane, a new element entered the general consciousness; the Khmer Rouge were on the move. I recall wondering at the time about the Khmer Rouge. Who were their leaders? How had their guerrilla army arisen so fast? What was their relation to Sihanouk? Unlike the PRG and the DRV, no friendly interviews appeared in the underground press and no free tours were offered to movement activists. The Khmer Rouge; it had a revolutionary ring to it, they were obviously to be supported.

Now Cambodia has entered the public consciousness as the new holocaust. As the popular story runs, the Khmer Rouge were a band of murderous Communists led by a madman, Pol Pot. It is also generally known that U.S. B-52's devastated a vast area of Cambodia prior to the Khmer Rouge victory. The simplicity of the story vanishes when it is recalled that the Khmer Rouge were overthrown by the Vietnamese Communists, and that the U.S. formally recognizes the Khmer Rouge's right to Cambodia's U.N. seat, and channels arms to an anti-Vietnamese front that includes the remnants of the Khmer Rouge.

Thanks to the diligent research of three scholars fluent in Khmer, it is now possible to answer nearly all the questions about Cambodia's recent history. It is logical to

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begin with *A History of Cambodia* by David P. Chandler. This book will certainly reinforce the argument that there is no substitute for solid historical knowledge of a particular country when debating current politics. This book casts a long shadow of doubt upon many of the familiar notions regarding the Cambodian catastrophe. It is far too superficial to attribute the antecedents of Pol Pot to Parisian Left Bank culture, Marxism, or French Colonialism. That his group triumphed was a fact of modern politics. But nearly all the actions of the Khmer Rouge have roots in Cambodia's past.

It is worth remembering that the main goal of the Khmer Rouge was the reconquest of the Mekong Delta which had been colonized by the Vietnamese in the 1620s. In the secret documents of the Khmer Rouge, Vietnam was listed as the number one enemy. No doubt, this fact would have shocked the New Left which believed that the old idea of socialist internationalism was being reborn in the struggle to support the revolution in Indochina. To put it in the parlance of the time, the Khmer Rouge were on a different wavelength.

The period of Cambodian history that sheds the most light on the Khmer Rouge state of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) is that of the twelfth century King Jayavarman VII. He transformed the traditional Cambodian Hinduized conception of Kingship into that of Mahayana Buddhism, as Chandler explains: "A 'Hindu' King's rule was an aggregation of statements-rituals, temples, poems, marriages, inscriptions and the like — and his grandeur and godliness. A Buddhist King made similar statements, but he addressed them, specifically, to an audience consisting of his people. This made the people less an ingredient of the King's magnificence (as his thousands of slaves had always been) than objects of his overwhelming compassion, an audience for his merit-making, and participants in *his* redemption" (p. 57). The direct cause of this break with the past, according to Chandler, was the Cham invasion of Angkor in 1177.

Jayavarman VII came to power in 1181, and with the modern King Sihanouk and Pol Pot, was one of the pivotal figures in Cambodian history. Chandler notes that the DK praised Jayavarman VII: ". . . his break with the past, his obsession with punitive expeditions, the impetuous grandeur of his building program, and his imposition of a national religion rather than his patronage of a royal cult all have parallels with recent events. Interestingly, the only feature of Angkorean life singled out for praise by Democratic Kampuchea was precisely the full-scale mobilization of the people that Jayavarman VII, but very few other Kings, managed to carry out" (p. 68).

What is most striking to a reader of Chandler's history who is familiar with Vietnam is Cambodia's unique historical identity in the region. Its early cultural tilt toward India and Sanskrit, for example, are but one of the many examples of its separateness from Vietnam. Ben Kiernan and Michael Vickery both indicate that the DK's virulent campaign against Vietnam flew in the face of geography and history. Kiernan's *How Pol Pot Came To Power* and Vickery's *Cambodia 1975-1982* lean toward an emphasis on what might have been, had the Communists favorable to Vietnam succeeded rather than the Pol Pot clique. Cambodia's historical conflict with Vietnam is given less weight than the good relations enjoyed by the Eastern Zone militants and peasants with the Viet Minh. The political slant in both these works towards establishing the legitimacy of the Vietnamese installed People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), headed by Heng Samrin, seems highly questionable in light of the past history of the two countries. Vickery, in particular, seems to assume that Cambodian history is at an end. He forsees a more idyllic future once a new generation with no ties to past conflicts comes of age. But the historical past is never completely erased, even after a holocaust.

Vietnamese colonization in the 1620s of what is now southern Vietnam had a

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tremendous impact on Cambodia, resulting in the loss of thousands of Khmers to Vietnamese rule and the severing of Cambodia's access to the sea of Prey Nokor (Saigon). As Chandler points out, "This process produced a legacy of resentment and anti-Vietnamese feeling that has been encouraged, for various reasons, by all the Cambodian regimes since independence, except, understandably, the People's Republic of Kampuchea" (p. 95). Vietnamese colonization set into motion an internal political game that saw succeeding rulers playing off Thailand and Vietnam, with rival power groups seeking support from either country. Chandler writes that the Vietnamese saw their presence in Cambodia as a modernizing one and he makes comparisons with French colonialism and the current PRK regime. The Vietnamese Emperor issued instructions that the Cambodian "barbarians" be instructed in the proper methods of agriculture and that Vietnamese should be taught in place of Khmer. A widespread rebellion broke out in the 1840s that lasted seven years. The Vietnamese became bogged down in a guerilla war and eventually also came into conflict with Thailand. By 1847 they were forced to withdraw from Cambodia, resulting in the ascendancy of Prince Duang. Duang, though largely subservient to Thailand, still sought an alliance with France to bolster Cambodia's position against the Vietnamese, the "traditional enemies," as he called them.

This anti-Vietnamese sentiment persisted into the next century and can be found in the elite that was emerging in the twilight of French colonialism. According to Kiernan, Thiounn Chum, the descendant of one of Cambodia's most powerful ruling families, tells a story illustrating Khmer nationalism: " 'In Paris during the Fontainebleau Conference, in July 1946, we were called to the Vietnamese delegation. 'You will pay your respects to Uncle Ho,' they said. But we answered, 'He is not our 'Uncle Ho.' " (p. 30). Chum eventually became the Minister of the Economy in the exiled DK cabinet.

Initially Cambodian resistance to the French Protectorate established in 1863 took the form of violent rebellions. But the French were successful in reenforcing the monarchy and the situation was relatively stable through the next century, well into the 1930s despite political unrest elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In Cambodia marauding groups of bandits made their appearance in the 30s. In addition, there was very limited Communist agitation, primarily among Vietnamese residents in the country.

After fifty years of French rule the first secondary school, the College Sisowath (the alma mater of of the Khmer Rouge) opened its doors in 1936. Needless to say, the complete lack of educational facilities had a severe impact on Khmer society. Intellectuals were scarce but, because of the Buddhist tradition, they had tremendous prestige. One of Saloth Sar's (Pol Pot) complaints against the pro-Viet Minh Unified Issarak Front was its failure to recognize his intellectual status by not appointing him to a leadership position. Instead, he was put in a production unit. In 1980 the DK regime-in-exile was still commenting on the U.I.F.'s treatment of intellectuals.

This resentment by the intellectual leaders of the Khmer Rouge seems to confirm Gouldner's theory concerning the historical formation of revolutionary intellectuals: "The alienation of the New Class of intellectuals (and intelligentsia) is based also on the blockage of their upward mobility. The first political appearance of radicalized intellectuals in politics, the Jacobin leadership, was in part prompted by the fact that their careers had at first manifested upward mobility, but their future ascendance was blocked by aristocratic preemptions; they were 'blocked ascendants,' not *déclassés*."[1]

Japanese suzerainty over Cambodia during WWII, and the collaboration of the

1. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York, 1979), p. 60.

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leading Khmer nationalist Son Ngoc Thanh with Tokyo, set the stage for the reassertion of French colonialism and a post-war Communist insurgency supported by Vietnam. On April 17, 1950 Cambodian members of the Vietnamese inspired Indochinese Communist Party formed the Unified Issarak Front. A year later the ICP was dissolved and the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) was founded. Despite a fairly strong military position, the KPRP's momentum was halted by King Sihanouk's successful 1953 campaign to achieve independence, and by the Geneva conference on Indochina the following year. According to Kiernan, as a result of the Chinese caving into U.S. pressures (or perhaps for strategic reasons of their own) the Cambodian guerrillas were frozen out of the conference. The Viet Minh, Kiernan argues, stood up for the participation of the Cambodian and Laotian guerrillas at Geneva. The Soviets supported the Viet Minh on this question. The Khmer guerrillas were forced by the Geneva Accords to lay down their weapons and to participate in fraudulent elections. As a result, many of the leaders of the movement went into exile in Hanoi.

In 1950 Saloth Sar was a member of a Marxist Circle of Cambodian students in Paris "apparently" affiliated with the French Communist Party (PCF) (Kiernan, p. 119). Sar's pen name in the group's newsletter was "The Original Khmer." Others in the group chose pen names such as "Free Khmer" and "Khmer Worker." Sar returned to Cambodia and joined a Unified Issarak Front cell consisting of ten Khmers and ten Vietnamese. After Geneva, along with other members of the Paris Marxist Circle, he resettled in Phnom Penh and took a position as a history teacher in the politically nonrepressive period of 1955-56. According to Kiernan "a strong undercurrent of modernity" was emerging in Khmer political life during this time "and the political thrust was radical."

Sihanouk attempted to assimilate these tendencies. He was particularly inclined towards the younger French educated leftists believing until the end that the real threat came from the veterans of the Unified Issark Front and Vietnam. To strengthen his domestic and international position, Sihanouk recognized the People's Republic of China. He never realized that the French trained radicals despised the Vietnamese and sought a close alliance with China (on later visits to China he was unaware that Pol Pot was also in the country). Ironically, it was the older pro-Vietnamese Communists who were inclined to see positive aspects in his government's international line while the Parisian Khmer intellectuals he tried to co-opt deeply resented the monarchy.

In the late 50s and early 60s the Pol Pot group waged a shadowy struggle against the Communist old guard which culminated in the death of Tou Samouth, the leader of the veteran Communists. His mysterious kidnapping and murder resulted in Pol Pot attaining the post of Acting General Secretary of the Party in 1962. Within a year Pol Pot left Phnom Penh for the countryside and several of his aides went underground in the capital. By 1966 the first Western news reports of an armed insurgency in Cambodia began to appear. By 1969 the armed struggle was causing Sihanouk's army problems but was not a major military threat, according to Kiernan. There was also opposition to Pol Pot inside the Party and the Vietnamese were expressing their disapproval of the armed insurgency. The escalation of the war in Vietnam and the resulting massive bombing of Cambodia changed the fortunes of the Khmer Rouge. After the U.S. sponsored overthrow of Sihanouk in March 1970, the Khmer Rouge were able to appropriate his popularity through some very astute political moves. With Chinese assistance Pol Pot secretly had the deposed Sihanouk draw up a resistance program that centered on an armed struggle against the Lon Nol. The Khmer Rouge supported Sihanouk in public while they made certain that they, and not the former King, would hold power in the future.

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The war in Vietnam began spreading into Cambodia in the late 60s. PRG dependence on the Cambodian port of Kompong Som and their sanctuaries deep inside Cambodia resulted in U.S. Green Beret raids (over 800 U.S. missions were staged inside Cambodia in 1967-68, reports Kiernan). There were also over 3,000 U.S. B-52 raids inside the country in the 1969-70 period. After the full-scale U.S. invasion on April 26, 1970, ARVN troops began looting the Cambodian countryside creating new recruits for the Khmer Rouge. Kiernan states that even Lon Nol became disgusted with the ARVN and also began to fear that South Vietnam would dominate Cambodia.

In June 1970, the Issarak veterans who had been residing in Hanoi began returning to Cambodia following a plan worked out by Pol Pot. Many were assigned to low echelon combat positions in the Khmer Rouge. Serious tensions began to develop between these cadres and the Khmer Rouge Leadership. In 1970 there were also occasional armed clashes between Vietnamese Communist forces and the Khmer Rouge, culminating two years later in a concerted drive by Pol Pot to force all Vietnamese Communist forces from Cambodian territory.

The Khmer Rouge made rapid advances against the Lon Nol forces. During the struggle against the Lon Nol there were already reports of Khmer Rouge atrocities directed against pro-Sihanouk cadres, captured Lon Nol troops and villagers believed to have collaborated with the Vietnamese Communists. But the Pol Pot faction of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, known as the CPK Center, did not control all of the regions of the Party or the country. Armed clashes even took place between rival party zones. In fact, of course, even after the establishment of the state of Democratic Kampuchea, policies differed from one region to the next and even from one village to another within a single zone of administration, as Michael Vickery has established in his interviews with hundreds of refugees. The revolutionary goals of the CPK were very consistent, however: "Defeat of the U.S. and Lon Nol was only a step towards the national and racial grandeur of which young members of the traditional elite had long dreamed," writes Kiernan (p. 362).

Chandler, Vickery and Kiernan emphasize that the incredible ferocity of the U.S. bombing threw Cambodian peasant society into total chaos. Kernan suggests that the CPK refusal to end the war through negotiations may have been a calculated move that the U.S. bombing could incite the populace against the Vietnamese Communists, the intended targets of the destructive raids. In any case, the bombing opened the door to Cambodia's chamber of horrors from the past which included mysticism, banditry and racial chauvinism.

What kind of revolution did these forces unleash? Vickery provides an interesting theory of the nature of this revolution: "Modern scholarship has put a name to movements showing the common characteristics of the Cambodian revolution . . . . The name is 'Populism,' particularly in its peasant variety . . . its program is one of rough revenge of the verities of the soil on the alien and sophisticated" (p. 285). Vickery believes that the excesses of the DK era were rooted in "the very nature of peasant revolution" (p. 287). He goes on to make some interesting comparisons between DK policies and peasant populism of Eastern Europe between the First and Second World Wars. Vickery also compares the Pol Pot group with the ascetic leaders of Spanish anarchism who were also school teachers, students and "semi-intellectuals" with a mission to organize rural laborers (p. 282). He also notes that the violence in Cambodia, as in Spain, was rooted in traditions of rural banditry.

These comparisons with Spain draw fascinating parallels but Vickery takes them too far. The reason he has brought them up in the first place is rather nasty. Vickery, it

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appears, would like to drop the corpse of the DK regime on the doorstep of Spanish anarchism. But Marxism-Leninism encompasses a broad spectrum of governments and movements from Cuba to Peru to North Korea. Saloth Sar's Khmer Rouge had excellent Marxist-Leninist credentials. The peasant character of the revolution does not contradict this fact. As Gouldner has observed: ". . . the roots of Stalinism are in the deception and disappointment of the peasantry by a small urban elite aiming to control this vast rural majority."[2] According to Gouldner, "The ingredients in the Cambodian Revolution were classic: an aroused and bloodied peasantry ready to join guerrilla forces under the guidance of a highly educated intellectual elite, whose ascetic impulses are aggravated by the corruption of an old regime which they identified with the city."[3] Gouldner's description of the Cuban revolution is also a reminder that Cambodia was not the first instance of a cohesive group of radicalized intellectuals transforming a Communist Party for their own revolutionary aims."[4]

In what is perhaps a more relevant comparison, Vickery analyzes in some detail the parallels between Cambodia and Yugoslavia. The comparison takes on added interest because of Pol Pot's visit to the country in 1950, a curious choice of itinerary for an associate of the French Communist Party. But perhaps the fact that Tito's army and the Communist Party had a predominantly peasant composition, and the voluntaristic schemes for rapid development, held more weight for 'The Original Khmer' than the edicts of Soviet dogma. As Vickery notes, the struggle in Yugoslavia, like Cambodia, had arisen as an armed resistance to a foreign power and was also a civil war between nationalists. Initially, the Tito government enacted policies which favored the peasants over the industrial workers. The Yugoslav party was also highly secretive and fanatical in its pursuit of territorial claims on Trieste.

In Vickery's opinion, Yugoslavia finally succeeded because its leaders were authentic Marxists who placed a major emphasis on industrialization. He also makes a similar comparison regarding Albania. The DK failure confirms the predictions of orthodox Marxism, if we are to believe Vickery: ". . . there is a line beyond which revolutions of the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese types cannot succeed, that voluntarism based on the development of communism out of peasant agriculture rather than forced industrialization, whatever the worth of the latter, will not work" (p. 280).

What Vickery seems to overlook is that even the DK, for all its hit and miss bloodshed, failed to match the very thorough totalitarianism of the orthodox Marxist-Leninist systems. Moreover, these systems have also been known for their sporadic periods of indiscriminate killing. Vickery, in his folly, is determined to follow this course of analysis to the heart of darkness: "The favored area of development was always urban and industrial, and as a result Albania, contrary to DK, saw its numbers of educated people, doctors, and technicians steadily grow. Although coercion was never eschewed and the political regime may offer little more individual freedom than DK, there has been clear economic and social progress . . ." (p. 280). I doubt whether there are many Cambodian survivors of the DK who will opt for the Albanian road to socialism.

Vickery's meticulous dismantling of what he calls the Standard Total View of selective and incomplete accounts of the DK deserves close attention. But his dubious political conclusions cast doubt upon his search for the rational kernel in the DK and now the PRK. Sometimes his anecdotes leave one aghast, in particular his account of a meeting

2. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

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with some Cambodian students at Tan So'n Nhu't airport in Ho Chi Minh City in August, 1981: ". . . I got into a conversation with the leader of a group of a dozen or so Khmer younsters . . . on their way home after a month long trip to Hungary, which they had greatly enjoyed . . . . The children were healthy, obviously well fed, cheerful, voluble, and full of praise for the present 'socialist' regime of Cambodia. Pol Pot, Lon Nol and Sihanouk seem for them to be nearly indistinguishable demons of the past . . . . It is no doubt on children such as these that the government hopes to develop a loyal, efficient administrative structure which it does not yet have. One of the legacies of Pol Pot is hundreds or even thousands of such children whose families are either dead or broken, for whom life today in Cambodia is as day to night compared with what they have known previously, and for whom Hungary or the Soviet Union, friendly nations held up as models, must seem paradises" (pp. 245-246).

Unfortunately history always seems to depart from the reasonable path charted by the rational leaders of Marxism-Leninism. There always seem to be Catholic dissidents, Islamic bandits, insane writers or malcontents in the shipyard who throw a monkey wrench into the smooth-running machinery of paradise. It would not surprise me in the least if one of those children Vickery met at the airport rediscovers Cambodian nationalism at some point in the future. A Cambodian teenager I know whose family, minus the father, was saved from the DK regime by the Vietnamese invasion has never expressed a word of thanks, as it were. Her only comment regarding the actual invasion was to speak contemptuously of the Khmer Rouge as cowards who ran from the Vietnamese. When I asked her what she thought of the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia she said, "They want Cambodian ground. Why are they trying to cause trouble?" When I pointed out to her that she would still be living under the Khmer Rouge if it were not for the Vietnamese, she had no response. When I told her there was active resistance to the Vietnamese she commented, "But that means more people will die." When I told her that a new regime of "good Communists" had restored life in her old city of Phnom Penh she stared at me in disbelief. The conversation ended when I informed her that the Khmer Rouge were fighting a guerrilla war against the new government. Angry and upset she replied, "No. The Khmer Rouge are all dead, They're dead. You're wrong."[5] Knowledge of just this one refugee family convinces me of the wisdom of Vickery's attack on the Standard Total View. My own efforts to obtain accurate information about Cambodia and the history of the family proved to be very difficult. Frequently the information, not to mention the deliberate disinformation, did not match the STV of the killing fields.

Vickery also deserves praise for his assault on current U.S. policy towards Cambodia. Even a recent issue of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine reported that the Cambodians are in no mood for fighting of any kind. Yet the U.S. continues to fund the anti-PRK guerrillas front which includes the Khmer Rouge. The Cambodians and the Vietnamese have a long tradition of mutual conflict and retreat from conflict. It seems inconceivable that the Cambodian nation will be absorbed into Vietnam. It may take many decades but Cambodia will certainly reassert itself.

From Vickery's description and a recent PBS documentary on William Shawcross's

5. Cambodian refugee children have special learning problems as noted in the Portland Public Schools. Perhaps a psychologist from the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center who has studied these problems would find my questioning of this student harsh and insensitive. But the student in question, a lively Brechtian survivor, occasionally brought up the subject of the DK herself. One of her most astute observations concerned her new homeland, the U.S.A.: "All that counts here is money."

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journey to Phnom Penh, it appears that Cambodia has fallen back on old traditions. The new government survives because it dares not ask the people to do much of anything. The roads continue to deteriorate, essential services are in disarray and most of Phnom Penh's new residents are former villagers who live by engaging in petty trade. Many of the administrators of the new government are former officials from the Sihanouk and Lon Nol eras.

Today Cambodia resembles many other Third World countries; spent from a headlong rush toward modernity, they are now in limbo or worse. Perhaps the most far-reaching consequence of this state of affairs is the ecological devastation taking place in the Third World.

Since the anti-colonialist era is now history and the developmental strategy of Marxism-Leninism discredited we can only hope that we are at the very beginning of an entirely new period.[6] As Chandler concludes, ". . . the 1980s should not be seen as an interval between two periods of recognizably Cambodian history, following a period of disorder, but as the beginning of a wide-ranging transformation, whose characteristics, duration, and consequences are impossible to predict" (p. 195).

**Tom Good**

6. "An Exchange on Cambodia," letters from Nayan Chanda, Ben Kiernan, K. Soren, and William Shawcross in *The New York Review of Books* (September 27, 1984) raise critical questions about Cambodia's future.

Martin Jay, *Marxism & Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas.* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984. xi + 576 pages. $29.50.

Intellectual history is a discipline still in the process of defining itself, or one which is constantly in need of redefining itself. As Jays' mentor, H. Stuart Hughes, writes in his introduction to *Consciousness and Society*: "To declare that one is writing intellectual history is really to say nothing until one has defined the term." Following this precept, Jay distances himself from Lovejoy's History of Ideas school because such a restrictive methodology would supposedly "do violence to the history of Marxist thought." He writes: "Western Marxists were intellectuals, often deeply engaged intellectuals, whose work responded to the events of their day. To understand the development of the concept of totality in their work is to probe that response. Although it cannot be demonstrated that immediate and direct parallels exist between their ideas and, say, their political histories or the national traditions which nurtured them — indeed, to presume so is to accept a version of totality that most of them would have questioned — certain mediated and indirect relations often can be discerned." He accordingly emphasizes that the pattern he has "discerned" is to a certain degree the one he has created. In terms of the hermeneutic distinctions emphasized by Bahti, he identifies this pattern as a *Nachkonstruktion* rather that a simple *Rekonstruktion* — instead of a neutral

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recording of history "as it actually happened" it is a rhetorical reenactment shaped by his own concerns and experiences. He thus records his "general agreement" with the presumed common premise of such theorists as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Foucault, White and LaCapra that "although the historian does not construct his or her narrative out of whole cloth, he or she nonetheless creates a coherence that the participants in the account may well have failed to perceive."

Given this definition of intellectual history, Jay records his own concerns and experiences: "From an initial interest in the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory, which grew in part out of a tempered sympathy for the New Left of the 1960s, my focus has widened to include the general tradition of Western Marxism as it has been revealed in the past decade or so of scholarship, partisan and otherwise. For better or worse, this process has been largely a scholarly rather than a broadly political one, at least in the United States, where the Left has been increasingly ghettoized in smaller and smaller academic enclaves. As a university professor with no sectarian political allegiances, I have been inevitably part of what some would call the 'academicization of Marxism.' The tradition of Western Marxism has come alive to me not through its concrete embodiments in movements, mass or otherwise, for radical social change, but rather through a dispersed cultural community of radical (and now sometimes formerly radical) intellectuals."

It does not necessarily follow that someone with Jay's background and concerns must necessarily ignore the political dimension of the ideas and thinkers he discusses. But, unfortunately, such is the case. Even more to the point: his cloistered meditation is too hermetic to be heretical; his methodology too hermeneutic to be historical. He tells us that he attempts to understand the concept of totality in the work of "Western Marxist" intellectuals by probing their response to the events of their day. But we never really learn precisely what they are responding to, other than themselves. Here intellectuals, even radical intellectuals, spend their time being radical and intellectual in a "Western Marxist" universe which supposedly had little or nothing to do with what Jay calls "Eastern Marxism," about which he has little or nothing to say. In spite of his broad allusions to the Holocuast, Stalinism and Hiroshima, the main point of reference for "Western Marxism" was presumably "bourgeois thought." And Jay's "Western Marxism" is all too bourgeois! There was, after all, a revolution going on. There is, after all, a connection between Marxism and Communism, or, at the very least, radical social change. There is too much German idealism and too little political, social, economic — yes, historical reality. While this might well have been true of many of the thinkers Jay discusses, it should not be true of his consideration of them and their ideas. Ideas and intellectuals have their history. But they do not have it just as they please, in a world they themselves invent. They may, of course, invent a world of their own. But even such invention takes place not only in ideas and the minds of intellectuals but in history. However intellectual history defines itself, it ultimately succeeds only when and if the historical context of ideas and intellectuals and their interaction with it is at least as evident as the context and content of the ideas and intellectuals themselves.

What Jay gives us is concentrated, even distilled thought, which is, to be sure, often interesting. His best chapters are on the figures of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno), which flesh out his ground-breaking study, *The Dialectical Imagination.* He does offer useful case studies of Lukács, Korsch, Bloch, Lefebvre, Goldmann, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Della Volpe, Colletti and Habermas, although his discussions are often overextended and his interpretations often forced by his govern-

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ing concept. He does succeed in providing us with *some* adventures of *several* concepts of totality. But what he calls *the* concept of totality does not succeed in providing us with "a compass to help us traverse the vast and uncharted intellectual territory that is Western Marxism." Part of the problem, of course, is Jay's notion of "Western Marxism." But the main part is the "concept of totality." Jay took Lukács at his word and made it the organizing principle of his work. His "compass" is really a cage, which holds far too many intellectual and political animals with different stripes and colors.

In Jay's thinking "Western Marxism" is a specific analytical category transcending its geographical frame, even though, as he writes, "the most common denominator among Western Marxists is that all were born or came of intellectual age in continental Western Europe." Even so, Lukács, Goldmann and Althusser are included in this frame only by virtue of the German and French contexts in which they intellectually matured. But Jay's problems with "Western Marxism" only begin with geography. Originally, "Western Marxism" meant a Hegelian Marxism that was far more dialectical than materialist, more humanist than economistic, more "critical" than "scientific," created by a loose circle of theorists who took their cue from Lukács and the other founding fathers of the immediate post-World War I era, namely Korsch, Gramsci and Bloch. Under "Western Marxism" he includes members of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno, Lowenthal and Benjamin), the French Hegelian Marxists Lefebvre and Goldmann, the French existentialist Marxists Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and, following Perry Anderson's *Considerations of Western Marxism*, also the critics of Hegelian Marxism, most particularly those who came to prominence in Italy and France after World War II (Della Volpe, Colletti and Althusser). Jay argues that "Far too much has occurred both in theory and practice to permit us to remain content with Merleau-Ponty's initial definition." But he offers no explanation of what that might be. Merleau-Ponty identified "Western Marxism solely with a subterranean tradition of humanist, subjectivist and undogmatic Marxism that was the negation of its official Soviet (or Eastern) counterpart," a tradition which retained the libertarian, emancipatory hopes of socialism because it challenged the scientific self-understanding of its rivals. In order to decide who now should be included under the rubric, Jay borrows Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances," which tells us that no perfectly uniform set of characteristics need by found to identify members of a collective entity. As Jay puts it: "Insofar as both neo-Hegelians and anti-Hegelians share certain other traits that cut across their antagonism over Marx's debt to German idealism, they can be understood as cousins, if not brothers in an extended family." But it is precisely this extension that reveals the folly of "the concept of totality" as a guide, since it not only obscures what is distinctive about what came to be called "Western Marxism" but what is basic to the critique of that theoretical and political orientation. Catholics and Protestants certainly have many "family resemblances." But it is hardly sufficient to call them all "Christians" because they both believe that Jesus is the Christ. The confessional civil wars and dogmatic disputes of the Middle Ages are enough to indicate that the Reformation cannot be explained by a common belief in the unity of the godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I am not suggesting that Lukác's *History and Class Consciousness* is comparable to Luther's teachings, since Lukács had no will or intention to revolt against Moscow. Quite the contrary! But there is an analogy with respect to the way some of his ideas were greeted by Soviet Marxist dogmatists and the effect they had on other thinkers. The analogy also holds true in that the concept of totality is no more a guide to "Western Marxism" than is the concept of the Trinity to Protestantism.

Just as all Christians must believe in the Trinity, so all Marxists must subscribe to a

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concept of totality, whether they be "Western" or "Eastern" Marxists, because such is inherent in Marx's thinking from his "Hegelian" period until the end of his life. There is as much a concept of totality in *Capital* as in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. One cannot be a "Marxist" without some concept, if not understanding, of totality. There can be no Marxism without totality. What, then, is specific to "Western Marxism?" Jay writes: "For Lukács, at least in certain moments in *History and Class Consciousness*, the subject of history and the object of history are ultimately one. The Western Marxist use of totality can be said to have begun with this expressive view of totality, although, as we will soon see, it certainly did not end with it." Indeed, it didn't; and here is one of the many flaws in Jay's reasoning. He seems to define "Western Marxism" by its *use* of totality. But not even all the founding fathers used it in the same way, since they did not all subscribe to Lukács's "expressive view of totality." Once we get beyond the founding fathers, the contention is even more tenuous. Jay explains "expressive totality" by quoting Althusser: "Borrowing from Montesquieu the idea that in a historical totality all concrete determinations, whether economic, political, moral or even military, express one single principle, Hegel conceives history in terms of the category of expressive totality." This "expressive (genetic) totality" is contrasted with "normative totality." But then we have "concrete totality," "decentered (non-genetic) totality," "extensive" and "intensive" totality, "longitudinal" and "latitudinal" totality and a host of others.

What is specific to Jay's conception of "Western Marxism" is the foundation laid in *History and Class Consciousness*. Consequently, his view of Lukács's book is very much to the point. He writes: "*History and Class Consciousness* can be seen as the most articulate expression on a theoretical level of the world-historical events of 1917, sharing in fact all of their fateful ambiguities." Yes, it can; but it certainly should not be seen that way. On what "theoretical level?" It was not Hegelian Marxism but Marxism-Leninism that made the revolution. That revolution occurred in Russia, about which Lukács said little and understood less. Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin individually and collectively better understood Russian society and history and had much more to say correctly as Marxist theorists about the 1917 Revolution than Lukács and all the "Western Marxists" combined. Jay's "intellectual history" is not only all too "bourgeois;" it is all too "Western." He claims that "the high-water mark of Hegelian Marxism came with the cresting of the revolutionary wave; its decline, which can already be discerned in the last sections of Lukács's book, followed swiftly the postwar revolutions' reversal of fortune. Its partial revival had to await an apparently comparable [sic] revolutionary wave in the 1960s." The "high-water mark" was thus none other than *History and Class Consciousness*, which Jay contends "has to be regarded as one of those rare synthetic visions that launch a new paradigm or problematic in thought, in this case Western Marxism. In fact, it was so synthetic in harnessing Hegelian Marxism for Bolshevik purposes that a distinctive Western Marxism did not really emerge until *after* the book was condemned by the Soviet authorities in 1924 at the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern. For Lukács, like Korsch and Gramsci, saw himself as a loyal follower of Lenin, so much so, in fact, that when the condemnation came, Lukács chose the Party over the complete integrity of his own ideas." Exactly! Then *History and Class Consciousness* did not succeed in "harnessing Hegelian Marxism for Bolshevik purposes." It was only in failing to do so that it fostered "Western Marxism." What about launching a new "paradigm" or "problematic"? In Kuhn's terms, a "paradigm" is what the members of a scientific (here: intellectual) community share; in Althusser's terms, a "problematic" is the theoretical or ideological context in which a word or concept exists. Jay

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appears to equate these terms and uses them interchangeably, although he puts much more emphasis on "Lukács and the Western Marxist Paradigm." But what is it? It is apparently not the concept of totality, since he writes that the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School "conclusively demolished the paradigm introduced by the first generation of Western Marxists, and with it, its concept of totality." This is all the more confusing since, as Jay himself indicates, this first generation of Western Marxists did not all share the same concept of totality. What, then, did they share that Jay considers the "Western Marxist paradigm"? He must mean the emphasis on the Hegelian, humanistic and dialectical dimensions of Marxism. But emphasis alone does not constitute a "paradigm" and this is certainly not equatable with a "problematic." When examining the behavior of the members of a *previously determined* community (as does Jay), Kuhn's procedure discloses two different senses of "paradigms." In the sociological sense it denotes the entire constellation of shared beliefs, values, techniques, etc. In the more deeply philosophical sense it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, namely the concrete puzzle-solutions, which can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles when employed as models or examples. Jay's "Western Marxist paradigm" can only be understood in the sociological sense, and even here he is on pretty shaky ground, since not even the founding fathers of "Western Marxism" shared a constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, etc. Moreover, his inclusion of the anti-Hegelian Marxists in a sort of community with "family resemblances" would seem to suggest a kind of paradigmatic relation between all "Western Marxists," even though the Frankfurt School and the French Structuralists consciously demolished the paradigm. What sort of "community" or "family" was this? Some supported the Soviet Union with their thinking and actions; some did not. Some were critical Marxists: some scientific Marxists. Many were ideological enemies throughout their lives.

Manifestly, the history of Marxism in this century is far too complex to be explained by such rubrics as "Western Marxism" and "Eastern Marxism." Perhaps the most outstanding example is Lukács himself. Jay points it up: "In short, by 1926 Lukács's use of the concept of totality had altered in essential ways . . . . Lukács' tortured later history is as much a part of 'Eastern' as Western Marxism if not more so." What are we to make of this? Even if Lukács's concept of totality was "altered in many ways," it was no more "altered" from his original concept than were those of the other members of the "family" of "Western Marxism." What makes Lukács's "tortured later history . . . as much a part of 'Eastern' as Western Marxism"? He still had and stressed a concept of totality. Is Jay here using the terms "Eastern" and "Western" in a purely geographical sense because Lukács went East instead of West? In any case, his methodological argument is confused and confusing. Another example, which I know all too well, is Wittfogel. Was Wittfogel a "Western" or an "Eastern" Marxist? Jay excludes him from the former "family," although he was born and educated in continental Western Europe and, different from Lukács, he went West in 1934. What about Wittfogel's attitude toward the Second International, which Jay tells us is the one thing on which neo-Hegelian and anti-Hegelians agreed: "Western Marxism, like Leninism, grew out of a disillusionment with the result of the Second International's theory-practice nexus. But whereas Leninism tended to change its practice without seriously challenging the theory it had inherited, Western Marxism understood the need to revise both. For while recognizing that there had indeed been a connection between theory and practice before 1914, the Western Marxists argued that it was a most unfortunate one. The scientistic, determinist economistic theory of Engels, Kautsky and

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Plekhanov et al. had contributed to the bureaucratic, non-revolutionary, and ultimately impotent politics of the Second International's mass parties, most notably the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)." Wittfogel certainly was closer to Leninism than to "Western Marxism" in this scenario. But the scenario is all too simplistic. Like the "Western Marxists," Marxists-Leninists argued that the connection between theory and practice before 1914 had been an unfortunate one. It was their answer to the problem that was different. Leninism was one such answer; *History and Class Consciousness* another, even though Lukács continued to consider himself a loyal Leninist. But Lenin, no less than Lukács, added a new theoretical dimension to Marxism. In the political context of the postwar revolutionary situation, Leninism was not and could not be heretical; Lukács's "Western Marxism" could and was. The point, however, is that Lukács's "Western Marxism" is the reverse image of a crude and undifferentiated notion of both the Marxism of the Second International and ultimately of Soviet or "Eastern" Marxism. There is no question that Lukács painted such a picture of the theoretical legacy of the Second International and that Jay's "Western Marxists" copied it, even as they themselves painted a similar picture of Soviet or "Eastern" Marxism. But in copying these pictures himself, Jay bows to rather than masters his material.

In his first book, *The Science of Bourgeois Society: A Marxist Inquiry*, Wittfogel not only evidenced a concept of totality, concrete historical totality, but an appreciation of Engels' rejection of both the philosophy of positivism and "philosophy" as such, pointing out that Engels considered Marxism "not philosophy, but positive knowledge of the world." Marx had qualitatively transformed both positivism and materialism into a "scientific" as opposed to a "philosophic" *Gestalt.* Jay refers to Lukács' 1925 critique of Wittfogel's "scientism." But already in 1922 Wittfogel quoted Engels' letter to Joseph Bloch concerning the materialist conception of history: "The *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase." Thus while the theory of Engels (and Marx) was "scientistic," it was neither deterministic nor economistic.

When Wittfogel first read Plekhanov's *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* in 1923, he found confirmation for his own understanding of Marx's views on Asia and of the relation between man, nature and society. But he rejected Plekhanov's geographical determinism. For Kautsky, he had no use at all. With respect to *History and Class Consciousness* and *Marxism and Philosophy* he acknowledged that Lukács and Korsch had made penetrating sketches of the "reality" of the "superstructure," but contended that their "reality" was based "purely on concentrated thought" rather than on the concrete reality of *Capital.* Concerning the Hegel-Marx relation and the role of dialectics, he saw that Marx had radically rejected Hegel's teleological position. In his view, Marxism did not postulate "history" as the "mean" through which man reaches his objectives. Recognizing that history has both causality and necessity, he nevertheless insisted that these terms had validity only under certain prerequisites and conditions. With respect to dialectics, he acknowledged that Hegel had indeed been Marx's teacher, but held that Marx's dialectics were grounded not in philosophy but in history. Wittfogel was certainly not a "Western Marxist" in Jay's terms. But neither was he an "Eastern Marxist" in the eyes of Moscow.

At the 1931 meeting in Moscow celebrating the centenary of Hegel's birth, published under the title *Hegel and Dialectical Materialism*, Wittfogel's ideas were even more

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heretical than Lukács'. While Jay makes no mention of this conference, it is essential to a complete understanding of "Western Marxism" in the narrower (Hegelian) and wider (totalistic) sense and its relation to "Eastern Marxism," for it was at this meeting that the philosophy of dialectical materialism triumphed over the science of historical materialism in Soviet thinking. In more than one sense, it was the "Eastern" counterpart of the "Western" triumph of Hegel over Marx. It did not, of course, consist in the humanistic philosophy of Lukács and Korsch et al. but in a gross dogmatic perversion which became Soviet ideology. But it was no less significant. In Wittfogel's remarks, he distinguished Marx's own "dialectical-materialistic method" from Hegel's idealistic dialectics. Referring to Hegel's dialectical principle of "totality," he asserted that social and economic categories were inadequately indicated and investigated. It was not enough to "invert" Hegel's dialectic materialistically; it was also necessary to employ completely "new categories." In so doing, these must be consistent with "historical practice." But Wittfogel's views of Hegel and Marx were no longer consistent with Soviet theory or practice.

Just as Jay ignores the critical relation between "Western Maxism" and "Eastern Marxism," so he all but ignores the critical relation between Marx and Feuerbach that signaled Marx's transition from his Hegelian and "philosophical" position to his mature and "scientific" position, i.e., the transition from his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* to his Feuerbach manuscript of 1845/46 (the first section of *The German Ideology*). It was in this last that Marx (and Engels) rejected their earlier Hegelian and philosophical position and stated clearly: "We know only one science, the science of history." Herein Marx wrote: "Where speculation ends . . . in real life — there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge takes its place. *When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence.*" When Marx's Feuerbach manuscript was first published in 1925, Wittfogel immediately recognized it as the foundation of Marxism, wherein dialectical and historical materialism find their concrete totality in history. It is the dividing line, as Althusser also well understood, and it is impossible to understand what is called Hegelian or "Western Marxism" without reference to it. Moreover, it also reveals that neither Marx's nor Wittfogel's "Marxism" has anything to do with a "simple-minded" notion of base and superstructure and the economic determination of history.

In Wittfogel's most systematic analysis of historical materialism, which is fundamentally based on Marx's Feuerbach manuscript, he indicated that man's relation to nature is an active relation and that human labor as man's decisive activity assumes the central role in historical development. Economy and society grow out of the "mediating" role of labor in man's relation to nature and the requirements of production. Jay does not mention Wittfogel's critique of Lukács' treatment of nature as a "social category" in *History and Class Consciousness*, nor that Lukács misunderstood the meaning of Marx's formulation regarding the "receding of the natural barriers." Relying on *The German Ideology* and *Capital*, Wittfogel demonstrated that the natural barriers are socially mediated and modified by laboring man, but even in the age of modern industry are never completely overcome. Instead, Jay repeats Lukács' misunderstanding when he writes: "This leap out of nature into social being, the 'retreat of the natural boundary [sic],' as Marx put it, remained for Lukács the crucial step for mankind." This is all the more regrettable, since it obscures Lukács's self-critique in his 1967 introduction to *History and Class Consciousness*, wherein Lukács writes "It is certainly a great achievement of *History and Class Consciousness* that it reinstated the category of totality, which

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the 'scientism' of Social Democratic opportunism had completely relegated to oblivion, to the methodological center it always held in the works of Marx," and also states: "From the standpoint of the ideology of the radical labor movement . . . the intermediary role of Feuerbach, which Plekhanov and others greatly overestimated, is relegated to the background." This is the crux of the matter. Lukács had consciously chosen to underestimate the intermediary role of Feuerbach in order to prove a direct link between Hegel and Marx and to present Marx's later and mature writings in a Hegelian guise. However, it was not the "scientism" of the Second International but the historical situation of Social Democracy in relation to the historical transformation of West-European capitalism that had made Marxism less revolutionary and more "opportunistic." Moreover, in 1914 European nationalism proved stronger than radical ideology. An intellectual like Lukács, and one inspired by the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, had to find an answer in "Marxist" philosophy because he could not accept one in "bourgeois" history. The "facts" were unacceptable and had to be transcended. Here, where Jay should be more "bourgeois," he accepts at face value the link between "scientism" and the failure of the Second International. Here is where intellectual history should separate ideas and history in order to discover their true relation. It is not enough to accept the received "truth" that Lukács or any other thinker gives as the reason of his or her ideas. It may, of course, be the right reason. But that must first be determined and demonstrated. One can certainly demonstrate the relation between Leninism and the specific Russian type of historical development (or the lack of it) to which he was responding both in theory and practice. Was there no relation between "Western Marxism" and the socio-economic, historico-political situation of Western Europe in the post-World War I period? Could it not have been the lack of a revolutionary situation in the Marxist sense that launched the leap into totality? This situation certainly was lacking in 1923, when Lenin's hoped-for "Revolution in the West" (firstly, Germany) failed, as it was thereafter. Jay never considers any of these questions. He only confronts ideas with other ideas.

Nowhere is Jay's conception of Western Marxism and his totality thesis less convincing than in his treatment of Althusser and Della Volpe. He writes: "Because the Althusserians were adamantly opposed to virtually everything that had previously passed as Western Marxism, there has been some controversy [!] over whether or not to include them in the category at all. If, as we have argued, the family resemblances linking Western Marxists should be loosely construed [!], then Althusser and his followers can legitimately be seen as cousins, if unfriendly ones, of the Marxist Humanists." This is really reaching for it. Jay acknowledges that the Althusserians decisively rejected "those links between Marxism and the tradition of idealist 'critical philosophy' that had been so enthusiastically defended by their predecessors [!] as a bulwark against vulgar Marxism. Instead, they insisted on Marxism's claim to scientificity with a fervor that often evoked the reproach that they had reverted back to the 'positivist' Dialectical Materialism of the Second International. No longer satisfied with Gramsci's equation of Marxism with a 'philosophy of praxis,' or content with his reading of October 1917 as a 'revolution against *Capital*,' they disdainfully rejected the humanistic, subjectivist concept of Marxism that informed his and other early Western Marxist views." For one thing, the perceived "positivist" tendency of the Marxism of the Second International emphasized not dialectical but historical materialism. For another, Jay only has one "similarity" to hang on: "Most obviously, Althusserian Marxism like Hegelian Marxism insisted on the importance of a holistic perspective." He even speculates that

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"possibly because of their marginal relation both to the class of their origin and the class to which they gravitated, the intellectuals in the Western Marxist tradition were particularly prone to think holistically." What are we to make of that? This same marginal relation was as true of Wittfogel, who did and does think holistically and is not a "Western Marxist." Theoretically, Wittfogel and Althusser have much more in common than Althusser and the "Western Marxists." As a matter of fact, what unites them is precisely what divides them from such as Lukács, Korsch and Gramsci — those same dichotomies of Hegelian and anti-Hegelian, Critical and Scientific Marxism that Jay sees obscuring the higher plane of reality called "totality." It certainly reminds one of Lukács' argument in *History and Class Consciousness.* But it is even less convincing at this point in time.

Jay's argument with respect to Della Volpe and his *Logic of Positive Science* is even thinner. He finds "unsuspected convergencies" between Della Volpe's and his student Colletti's critique of Lukács' original Marxist "paradigm" and those made by later "Western Marxists," most notably Adorno. He then comments: "What makes these parallels so surprising is that the Della Volpeans were unremittingly contemptuous of all other [!] Western Marxists, in particular the Frankfurt School, which they identified entirely with that irrationalistic and Romantic repudiation of science they were at such pains to refute." Of course, they were. And rightly so. The fact that Della Volpe uses some similar arguments against Lukács does not *ipso facto* make him a "Western Marxist," any more than it makes one *ipso facto* a Marxist if one uses some similar arguments to criticize the contradictions of capitalism. Jay's conclusion is the real clincher: "Nonetheless, as we have demonstrated [!] in the case of Althusser, Scientific and Critical Marxism were not as diametrically opposed as their adherents normally supposed, especially when it came to undermining the holistic paradigm of the earlier Western Marxists." Here, it would seem, the "Western Marxist paradigm" is the concept of totality, since Jay throughout his text equates totality with a holistic perspective. Whatever his contention, the dichotomies win out.

Dichotomies aside, there is no doubt that the ideas dealt with in Jay's book have not only enriched Marxism in the West but Western culture as well. But the ideas do not live in Jay's narrative. He fails to capture the spirit of adventure and challenge of the new that these ideas created, particularly during the 1920s. To be sure, the political demands of the Soviet experience and Stalinism, as well as the stark reality of Nazism, ultimately stifled this spirit. But it is much too sterile to characterize, as does Jay, the change from what he calls the "utopian" period of "Western Marxism" to the later period as one from "optimism" to "pessimism," although I must say that Jay's narrative is endlessly depressing. He clearly recognizes this problem when he writes: "The narrative I have constructed may seem to some a bleak tale of dashed expectations emplotted in a tragic [sic] or satiric mode, but I do not want to leave the impression that I believe the story is over and these are its only narrative forms. Totality is a concept whose adventures are not yet at an end." Jay leaves no doubt as to what, or rather who he has in mind: "The figure who embodied all of these characteristics and thus provided the only potentially plausible salvation of Marxist holism to emerge from the wreckage of the Western Marxist tradition, was the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas. If the narrative we have been emplotting in a tragic mode is to have a less somber end, we must turn to Habermas' Promethean effort to reconstruct Marxist holism on boldly new grounds." There are many who may find this encouraging. I am not among them. But even Jay must admit that "Habermas' attempt to reconstruct the Western Marxist concept of totality was, to be sure, limited." I do not

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know why Jay uses the past tense when he speaks of Habermas' "Promethean effort." But in so doing, he evidences the "pessimism" he finds so characteristic of "Western Marxism." One of his concluding statements is itself characteristic: "For if the human race is to avoid the negative totality of nuclear catastrophe, we may well need to find some positive alternative." We need not speculate on what that might be. In not seeing beyond the self-defined limits of the "Western Marxist" perspective, Jay fails to recognize the fiction of his "paradigm." In focussing on the concept of totality, the reality of the dichotomies is sacrificed to a "higher reality" which is all too totalistic to be trenchant.

**G.L. Ulmen**

## Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1981).

It is no longer possible to consider Critical Theory a unified project. Yet, the differing approaches within the Frankfurt School continue to influence contemporary theoretical debates in spite of the fact that Habermas and his pupils have shifted their focus towards more conventional academic disciplines — although Habermas' own writings often preserve the synthetic breadth which characterized the School's earlier work. Still, the emphatic questioning of Western rationality, as in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Negative Dialectics*, is becoming increasingly the preserve of post-structuralism.

At the same time, Adorno's insistence on the possibility of rationality has been forgotten, while the limitations of negative dialectics are also affecting deconstruction. The same unwillingness to confront praxis has now also become typical of post-structuralism. In this context, Negt's and Kluge's work is important.[1] In 1972, in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, the authors wrote in the face of the impending wholesale collapse of the student movement. They wanted to expand "political economy to encompass the real experiences of people."[2] With the changed climate of the Eighties, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* takes up their earlier demand for a new look at the theory of labor. It combines motifs from Marxism, Critical Theory, and post-structuralism from a new perspective, when most current radical theory tends increasingly towards paradox and stasis.

In an interview discussing *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Negt noted some of the problems facing Marxist theorists under modern capitalism: "if you only see capital, commodity production, advertising at work wherever you go, you will see very little of the life-contexts in different countries, and above all you will overlook how resistance movements constitute themselves."[3] The authors take as their point of departure Adorno's

1. Translating the title *Geschichte und Eigensinn* is a major problem. "*Eigensinn*" generally does mean stubbornness or willfulness. The Grimm brothers' story of the "stubborn child" is almost certainly the origin of the title.
2. Negt and Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 16.
3. "Die Geschichte der lebendigen Arbeitskraft. Diskussion mit Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge." *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, Heft 48, Jahrgang 13, p. 86.

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now unfashionable position that the commodity form has penetrated all spheres of social life. They do not, however, use traditional Critical Theory to consider the implications of this assumption. Instead, they add a "political economy of labor-power" to Marx's political economy of capital that contrasts "the history of the individual attributes of labor power with the different history of the needs for association" (p. 89). There is no theoretical foundation for such a theory in Marxism, even though it has to be presupposed as the condition for the very development of capital. The initial problem is that this historical process cannot be examined by means of the categories of commodity, production, and labor as they appear in what the authors term the "public sphere of production." How, then, can one construct such a theory?

In *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, they had introduced the idea of the "proletarian public sphere." They considered the notion of the "public sphere" as such ambiguous: "public sphere refers to certain *institutions*, establishments, activities (e.g., public power, press, public opinion, audience, publicity work, streets and squares); but at the same time it is also a general social *horizon of experience*, in which what is really or supposedly relevant for all members of society is summarized. In this sense, the public sphere is, on the one hand, a matter for a few professionals (e.g., politicians, editors, officials of federations); on the other, it is something which has to do with everybody and which is only realized in the heads of people, a dimension of their consciousness."[4] The traditional difficulty, which is essential for understanding the repeated failures of organized socialist politics, is that what has been analyzed so far has been only the bourgeois public sphere. Thus, they focused on what is excluded, i.e., the "proletarian public sphere." In fact, however, even this public sphere as a dimension of people's consciousness is largely constituted by bourgeois institutions. The mass-media, workplace, schools, etc., constitute most of the means by which experience is organized.

Up to this point their analysis sounds like another Althusserian account of ideology and ideological state apparatuses or a resigned Adornoesque account of the culture industry commodifying forms of thinking. But the authors alter their perspective by amplifying the Marxian distinction between the labor appropriated by capital, and labor power which produces objectified labor, combining it with a broader notion of production. This shift has important consequences. While the Marxian distinction of productive and unproductive labor is essential for understanding the logic of capital, it blocks access to other unpaid forms of labor necessary for any society to function. What is actually paid for in a society depends on historical agreement: "Education in the parent's house is unpaid, that in kindergartens or by a teacher at school is paid. These very limited historical classifications of labor and payment cannot be the criterion for productivity" (p. 875). This, however, does not invalidate the Marxian distinction which was vital in the early bourgeois criticism of the unproductive ruling class and explains one feature of capital. Negt's and Kluge's modification merely changes the perspective on many issues, including the notorious distinction between "alienated" and "non-alienated" labor.

They re-read the "gaps" in Marx that, e.g., Derrida has located in relation to other major philosophical thinkers. In *Capital* Marx describes the wage-laborer's ownership of his labor-power as a commodity — something he sells within a particular form of socio-economic organization. However, the *production* of the commodity sold — labor-power — has nothing directly to do with how it is evaluated in capitalism. The *mode* of

4. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

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production of human labor itself can never be seen in terms of capitalism, whose value system is always subsequent to and dependent on it.

In this the authors echo the revival of interest in Schelling's philosophy which has been promoted by Manfred Frank. Such a view of labor clearly echoes Hölderlin's statement that "the art and activity of man, however much it has already achieved, cannot produce something living, cannot itself create the original material which it changes, works upon, it can develop the creative force, but the creative force itself is eternal and not the product of human hands." They insist on those aspects of self-regulation in the species which can never fully be subsumed into praxis. The most obvious and striking example of this is, of course, women's labor which reproduces the species. Furthermore, unlike other commodities, the determination of the value of labor-power has an historical and moral element. Although essential to Marxian theory, this has only rarely been substantially analysed.

For example, a farmer's labor, which involves many highly developed skills, has no need to *seek* its object: what has to be done is the essential component of his life. After the farmer's separation from the land and the traditional community, his relation to the world changes. Labor capacities are freed from life-long attachment to their objects and can be directed at any object. They also can develop a much greater potential for protest against attachment to their particular work conditions. This is "the condition for the genesis of the consciousness of alienation."[5] A new gap opens up between inner motivations and the realization of labor power. This gap is, as Foucault suggests, the new location for the exercise and production of power. As Negt and Kluge insist, however, it is also the location of resistance. With Foucault, the authors are interested in the "microphysics of power," but they give it a more complex materialist foundation than the largely Nietzschean one Foucault provides. As Burger notes, "they show why these resistances must exist . . . as long as there is oppression there is resistance."[6] According to Burger, they actually *invert* Foucault's perspective. What Foucault "describes 'from above' as a strategy of disciplining from the viewpoint of power centers dispersed over the surface of the social body, Negt and Kluge describe 'from below.' " They go at it "from the side of the consequences, destructions, expropriations, attempts at speeding up natural processes and spontaneous refusals: from the side of the 'conservatism of elementary forces' (p. 49) *which only thereby is able to appear at all.*"[7]

Thus the argument does not take as its point of departure some essential notion of man or nature. These terms emerge in a different way when seen in terms of the effects produced by the *repression* of something not known a priori. The nature of the body's "natural" self-regulation can become apparent only within historically produced conditions. The fact that part of the evidence emerges from concentration camps seems distressingly convincing. In a similar way, it is possible to talk about alienation only from the new perspective on labor-power resulting from original accumulation. Our ability to gain a perspective on these issues involves the awareness of the catastrophes that produce the awareness, which is a salutary reminder of our own part in processes that we can hardly expect simply to transcend.

Such an approach, however, does not ignore possibilities of liberation. If the received dominant image of the subject in the public sphere has revealed such limits,

5. *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
6. Rudolf Burger, "Die Mikrophysik des Widerstands" in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

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then it is possible to form a public sphere that rearranges those aspects of the subject which *have* emerged in a way which has more to do with what can be learned from history. This can be made more concrete by looking at the book's account of the production of domination (p. 262-5). As most theories of ideology suggest, the easiest way of producing effective domination is by laying claim to insights into what is "really real." In terms of Negt's and Kluge's book: "The question is that of the labor capacities which, if they are combined, create the so-called reality-principle. The most general relation of domination is located in the collective process of production *which grants an automatic functioning to real social relations simply because they are real*" (p. 262).

The example of the demise of feudal monarchs can reinforce this point, following Norbert Elias' analysis of the role of the king in *The Court Society.* The authority of the king has a basis in physical violence, but that alone would not be enough to sustain it. The unproductive class in feudalism " 'produces' the idea of a reality in so far as this cannot be produced in the primary productive area. Once it is certain that the confirmation of our life as something real can also be received in other ways, and once the king, etc., shows himself not to be what keeps reality moving, he is abolished" (p. 262-3). With the growing dominance of the bourgeoisie, what used to be a function of the ruling class becomes transferred into commodity exchange and thereby *dispersed.* Domination on this level works in terms of self-disciplining through the need to convince oneself of the reality of what one is producing, even though this reality is not in any way directly apparent. Failure to do this can have devastating effects. It is at the points of breakdown that things, which might otherwise seem abstract and unprovable speculations, begin to make sense. They cite as examples the hundreds of thousands of people during the transition to industrial society who were prepared to be locked up or starve rather than to spend their lives as wage laborers. They also point to the more recent example of Germans in 1945 after the disintegration of the Third Reich: "some — and particularly if they were not too closely attached to the collapsed context of reality of the Third Reich — find their way very quickly into specific work; others exhibit a helpless staring, a months-long inability to find their way into things" (p. 266). The essential aspect of such widely divergent historical changes is the constant need to produce the idea that one's externalization of labor-power is part of an overall reality. Such a need is generally stronger than any supposed "instinct for self-preservation." The rise in suicides and premature death among the unemployed in England makes the point clear. The energy which goes into sustaining the subjective idea that this "reality" is "real" both sustains that reality's continued existence and decimates possibilities for change. For the authors, all historical "reality" is also unreal because it arises by cutting off all the repressed possibilities which have not yet been realized.

They also discuss the "collective-worker" as a "synthesis of all those activities from which a society cannot abstract without losing its basis of existence" (p. 1225). Prior to capitalism, this concept was used to criticize domination. The ruler himself was not part of the collective-worker because he did not actually play a role in social reproduction. This ceases to be the case in capitalism. Thus, "for the first time in history the objective illusion, which is founded in the mode of production itself, arises that the ruling class is the only productive class of society. Capital as that which is produced appears as the organizing center of production, which combines all activities in society and makes them into productive activities at all . . . . *It is therefore not only labor in society that capital incorporates* into itself, but also the social combinations of labor-power which accumulate opposite the worker as social forces" (p. 1226).

As Marx insisted, even though the worker *does* produce the basis of social reproduc-

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tion, he is unable to see this fact. "The 'collective-worker,' society as a great work-shop, expresses the development of the worker's social powers, but it does not give him his own identity in his social functions" (p. 1228). Confronted with the growing domination of the "collective-worker," Negt and Kluge consider it vital to defend the primacy of *living* over dead labor in social reproduction. The emancipatory perspective emerges if living labor is able to find ways of organizing dead labor: "the emergence of a new society is not a creation *ex nihilo*, instead it is an, albeit explosive, release of socially produced labor-power which has already developed in capitalist conditions" (p. 1230-1). The vital issue is how to reduce the power of the product over the producer. Here, the authors work with a modified version of Benjamin's concept of repression in the *Arcades Project* which is extended to the collective level. Since the repressed always returns in a distorted form in Freud's model, Kluge has suggested how this might make sense on the collective level in relation to the failure in Germany to come to terms with its Nazi past. It is a failure resulting from the inability to reorganize the public sphere. "What is not redeemed (the German word is "*eingelöst*," which has mainly to do with pawn-shops, not with theology, where the word is "*erlösen*") in 1945 or was revoked in 1949 explodes in 1968. It will return again until it is redeemed."[8] The argument applies *also* to what the Nazis, in a perverted way, were trying to "redeem" in the repressions of a very long history. This somewhat shocking re-evaluation of Nazism is central to understanding the book.

Instead of taking the economics of Nazism's rise as the major issue, Negt and Kluge focus on the change in labor-power's relation to the public sphere. The evident economic factors, like the crisis in heavy industry solved by new arms production for an internal market, do not explain the spectacular concentration of energy in certain areas of the German economy.[9] Surplus value was produced at levels which would be impossible in a normal capitalist economy, and this cannot be explained simply in terms of coercion. As the authors see it: "for German workers the National Socialist illusion develops a perspective on their own productive power" (p. 645). The creation of new forms of public space via mass assemblies, parades, etc., gave a symbolic intuition of the power of the "collective worker." This creates an apparent break with the process of abstraction. The objectification of labor-power seems more "real." The point of production, however, is lost: "as long as the National Socialists concern themselves with . . . war, movement, or production, they dress up the arguments with the idea of the earth: 'Nation without space'; 'winning back of Indo-Germania in the territories of South Russia'; 'defensive villages on the Ural,' 'inherited estates' — this all points to a desire for a thoroughly new distribution of the earth." (p. 645).

While this is "unreal," it mobilizes real energy in unprecedented ways, Negt has suggested that the energy has roots going back to the twelfth century. The creation of a new public sphere satisfies needs for community related to issues raised in connection with original appropriation. Seeing Nazism this way also changes the perspective on the apparent widespread lack of energy for radical change in the developed capitalist world. Kluge has recently suggested how the news media can become a "replacement for fascism."[10] A public sphere created by the mass mobilization of repressed labor capacities, such as the Nazis created, is too dangerous in a more highly developed

8. Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 288.

9. For a useful account of this side of the argument see Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Ökonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus* (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 288.

10. Alexander Kluge, "Zum Unterschied von machbar und gewalttätig" in *Merkur*, n. 425, (April, 1984), p. 245.

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economy. This energy is now catered to in a "public sphere" constituted by private industries devoted to fulfilling needs which were previously satisfied by an at least partially active public sphere. The tendency of these developments is for more and more essential activities to take place at home with means sold by private interests with the support of right-wing governments. Kluge suggests the danger of such privatism: "where does violence begin, if we crudely change, industrialize or give to private businessmen to practice on, the ecology of the symbolic sequences that people live off as they live off food?"[11] The destruction of the public sphere by the anarchic spread of new media eventually destroys the only places where the effects of that destruction can be seen and worked against.

Confronted with the question as to whether their approach does not see "on the side of society only the growing wealth and on the side of the subjects only continuing expropriation and impoverishment" (an Adorno-like position), Negt suggests a more complex view. In the world of microelectronics and the new media, a whole new range of capacities is available, but what is actually done with the products has nothing at all like their equivalent range. "The subjects admittedly become richer, for example, in their single attributes, in the specialized perceptual capacity of individual senses, but not in their combinatory power to use the *products* of their attributes."[12] In the early bourgeois era these potentials were different. The example of the development of music from Bach to Wagner as described by Adorno gives a useful image of this: the rapid technical development of music allowed an increasingly differentiated kind of expression. In the early bourgeois era, "the human possibilities were superior to what was technically available." Now the situation is different. The technical means are qualitatively increased, but what subjectivity can do with them has diminished. In this fact "lies one of the reasons why productive forces turn into destructive forces. Productive forces become more and more destructive forces as the subject has fewer possibilities to appropriate them."[13] How this applies to Nazism is fairly obvious; exactly how it applies to the present is a question which needs yet to be worked out. The authors give some preliminary suggestions in their sketch of a theory of war. There is surprisingly little sustained attention to war in most radical theory. A massive process of repression seems to be at work. Despite the active involvement of Marxists in peace movements, there is no contemporary Marxian theorist of war. Negt's and Kluge's sketch of a theory begins with a demystifying move, "war seems something so overwhelming to us that we do not examine its individual steps . . . as what they really are: applied labor capacities, *labor*. By themselves, each of these individual steps would never be war; they are war only when they are combined" (p. 798). What people essentially do in war is no different from what they do in "peace," the activities are just combined and carried out differently.

The question, then, is what constitutes this combination. War as labor does not mean that in the world wars the essential factor was productive capacity — Germany lost because American factories could produce more arms — but that the "fighting" itself is best analyzed from the viewpoint of the categories of labor. If one takes this approach and looks at the Falklands-Malvinas conflict, the results are informative. On an obvious level, the soldiers involved have referred to it as a "job." On another level, take the basic tenet of the political economy of labor power that: "Labor-power can only realize itself to the limited extent that the market allows" (p. 854). In a country

11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
13. *Ibid.*

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where the realization of labor-power is increasingly diminished by the limitations of the so-called "market economy," the build-up of real frustrations — an obvious area of repression — starts to take on forms not unrelated to what preceded Nazism. In war, the results of certain productive capacities, the arms industry and the armed forces, are made part of a wider public sphere. "In war you fire at '*to whom it may concern.*' Opponents do not have to be asked if they want to buy the bombardment. The result is destructive production through which labor-power can experience its reality more fully than is possible in the limits of peaceful production" (p. 854).

The libidinal force of the situation is obvious. A simplification of goals, wishes, etc. results from the degree of immediacy in the public sphere produced by "fighting an enemy" rather than trying to locate oneself in the sphere of production where the product is never directly available. A degree of working class support is thus hardly surprising. The success of the Falklands-Malvinas war as a means of creating a new public sphere, however temporarily, also related to its mobilization of historical images of war that are now simply fantasy. For a brief moment people had the image of participating in "history." Once again, the crucial fact is that these images are *real* historical forces: people are burned to death for them. *Motivation* often has far more "material" force than the existence of material objects. Even more importantly, it tends to be sustained for much greater periods of time.

Negt's and Kluge's sketch of a theory of war does not solve the contradictions it creates for a materialist theory. Their insistence on the historical "return of the repressed" makes this clear: "what works towards war in . . . labor capacities are attributes which try to win back their reality in the war relation. They can be . . . protests against separation or acts of violence which have become indeterminate" (p. 856-7). Once a war has started, it can subsume *all* such energies. Such a view refuses to "demonize" what normally is put hastily into the realm of "the irrational." By refusing to see war as essentially different from any manifestation of the public sphere of production, they can show continuities in the violence present in the "peaceful" production process, like the arms industry, and the overt physical violence of war. "What becomes public in war is a specific attribute of real social relations: the anarchic appropriation of the collective product of history" (p. 860). It is nonsense to pretend that "war" means the same in a craft-based society as it does in an industrial or, even, post-industrial society, *even though that is precisely what everyone does most of the time.* This fact is, in terms of the theory of labor-power and the public sphere, *itself a productive factor* in the present likelihood of "atomic war." Such a "war," the authors maintain, can only be described as an accident in that it can in no way fulfill the Clausewitzian criterion of "subordinating the will of the enemy" and could not meaningfully involve "strategy."

The individual images of what war is will never have any real substance because they are based on what people have seen in the past or on film: "People had such images before WWII — in this war, though, virtually no events corresponded to these images. Air-raids looked different and, contrary to expectation, there were no gas attacks."[14] By definition, war is the form of the total domination of the product over the producer. No image can be appropriate to this in advance. The political task is to make people at least see this fact.

The outbreak of WWII and the enthusiasm it provoked illustrate this issue. Even if German politicians had wanted war, it is clear that nobody wanted the kind of war it became. They planned the war on images that the means of production had long since

14. *Macht der Gefühle*, p. 551.

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outstripped. Why, then, the great wave of popular enthusiasm? The authors consider Freud's account in a way which links this issue to the political economy of labor-power. According to Freud, the war stripped away the cultural accretions of society and allowed the primitive man in us to reappear. The authors question such a failure to see people in terms of social and historical relations. Instead, the outbreak of war changes the public sphere and the economic balance. The frequency in accounts of the outbreak of the war of the metaphor of a "holiday" suggests the force of this change. "The potential which is released and which had been tied up in the balance-economies has the subjective effect of a feeling of strength which . . . makes decisions in the inner civil-war with myself — in the economy of self-alienation — seem possible. Fear, which was previously diffuse, because it arose in the intimacy of inner separation and from the defense against the repressed structure of drives, relativizes itself in relation to certain nameable opponents" (p. 832-3). Much more energy is projected into the public sphere, with well-known results. What WWI revealed was the most spectacular example up to then of the disparity between the technical means of production and the conceptual means for grasping the implications of those technical forces. This disparity has hardly diminished. Today, it is at the very heart of the political economy of labor power. As the theory of labor-power outlined here suggests, the accumulation of dead labor in the modern period is such that a new question emerges: what can living labor do with the labor that has already been done, including the labor of constituting the subject? Hence, the authors focus on the changing constitution of the subject which comes about with the historically observable separation from "original property." What is not wholly subsumed by this development must now be the focus of radical theory.

Their theory avoids both Adorno's tendency to exclude any substantive implications about the way out of the rationalized world of the dialectic of enlightenment and the Lacanian tendency to ontologize the constitution of the individual subjects as a subversion of the real subject by the symbolic order. Their concern is with the irreducibly individual aspects of the subject that cannot be subsumed into the dominant forms of a commodity-based society. The authors do not offer a strict philosophical account. Instead, the book poses questions that need further consideration. Their main concern is to identify resources that change a conception of the wholesale imprisonment of the subject in a commodified society or in the confines of language or the symbolic order. As Manfred Frank suggests: "If there *were* no subject, who would suffer the compulsions of language?"[15] Similarly, if nothing can suggest the potential available beyond the dominant forms of exchange on the economic level, then Critical Theory simply must stagnate. Negt and Kluge have attempted the risky undertaking of tracing the history of those stubborn components of subjectivity that now verges on being buried both by new material and theoretical developments.

**Andrew Bowie**

15. Manfred Frank, *Was ist Neostrukturalismus?* (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 429. For a review of Frank's book which connects it to *Geschichte und Eigensinn* see my "Individuality and Difference" in *Oxford Literary Review* Vol. 7, Nos. 1-2, 1985, pp. 117-130.

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April 6, 1986

International Bakers' Association
24 Dupont Circle
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Editor:

It has come to our attention that in a review of Juan E. Corradi's book, *The Fitful Republic: Economy, Society and Politics in Argentina*, in the Fall 1985 issue of *Telos* on p. 183, Professor Patrick M. Hughes, in discussing the crisis of the Argentine economy during the last decade, claims that, while "multinational corporations were negatively affected," for some reason "international bakers were the only beneficiaries."

This comes as a complete surprise to us. To the best of our knowledge, sales of bread in Argentina during the last 10 years have increased only slightly, while the continuing depressed cost of wheat has not resulted in any windfall profits. In fact, given the galloping inflation in Argentina during that time, most international bakers in Argentina have had a hard time remaining solvent.

The crisis has even effected negatively the previously thriving pastry industry. Videla's, Viola's and Galtieri's famous but re-cycled statement: "Let them eat cake" in response to popular complaints concerning declining nutritional standards did not lead to an increase in sales of baked goods but, rather, to a response roughly similar to the one in France a couple of centuries earlier.

Of course, we are in the dough business. Rest reassured, however, that, Professor Hughes to the contrary notwithstanding, we did not make any in Argentina.

Best Regards,

Joseph A. Cook, President
International Bakers' Association

*Telos* wishes to extend its apologies to the International Bakers' Association. Professor Hughes did not refer to "international bakers" but to "international bankers" as benefiting from the crisis in Argentina. Our typesetters, however, who tend to do more baking than banking, mistakenly omitted the all important "n." Word has gone out to them that any more errors of this kind will result in the impounding of their ovens and cookie sheets. The typesetters deny all guilt.


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